

WOMEN IN A MEN'S WORLD: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF
WOMEN WORKING AT A MEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of women corrections workers working in a men's correctional facility using narrative inquiry. Past research on women employed in corrections has largely been quantitative in nature focusing on problems and challenges that women are likely to face in a correctional environment. Additionally, the majority of research on women corrections workers is dated, having occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when women were first employed in men's institutions. By using narrative inquiry I hoped to give a voice to women corrections workers in order to share their experiences. In order to explore these experiences I asked five women corrections workers employed at a men's correctional facility to keep a diary reflecting on their experiences following their shifts for a one-week period, and also participate in a semi-structured interview about their experiences throughout their career. During the interview and diary entries, the participants were asked to reflect on and discuss topics related to being a woman in the corrections worker role, including challenges, rewards, gender issues, and self-identity. As I was in the unique position of also being a woman corrections worker, I took part in the study as a participant. A thematic analysis (Reissman, 2008) of the study data revealed several themes - *Defying Tradition*, *The Asset of Women Corrections Workers*, *Women Surviving and Thriving in the Corrections Environment*, *Good Old Boy's Club*, *Dual Identity: Corrections Worker First, Woman Second*, *Zero Harassment Tolerance?*, *Being Broken Down...*, and *Changes for the Worse?* The themes were discussed in relation to the meanings they represented for the women (Polkinghorne, 1988). This study contributed to the literature on women working in men's correctional facilities and suggested implications for women corrections workers, the institutions where they are employed, and areas for future research.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my fellow women corrections workers. Your stories embodied bravery and courageousness; they were truly inspiring to me. Your stories are what made this thesis possible and I hope you enjoyed sharing in this research process with me as much as I did with you.

Table of Contents

PERMISSION TO USE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Summary of the Literature	2
Study Rational	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Question	5
Overview of Chapters	5
Definitions	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Women Working in Traditionally Male Dominated Careers.....	7
Women in Law Enforcement.....	7
Women in the Military.....	9
The Nature of Corrections Work	9
The History of Women Corrections Workers in Canada	10
Working in a Sexualized Workplace	12
Corrections Work and the Woman Identity	14
Gender Model vs. Job Model.....	14
Role Traps.....	16
Unique Challenges Experienced by Women Corrections Workers	18
How Men Corrections Workers View Women Staff	20

What Can Women Bring to Corrections?	21
How Women Corrections Workers View Themselves	22
Male Inmate’s Attitudes about Women Corrections Workers	23
Experience in Dealing with Workplace Harassment	24
Gender Harassment.....	24
Sexual Harassment.....	25
Stress and Mental Health Issues of Women Corrections Workers	25
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	28
Qualitative Inquiry	28
Epistemological and Ontological Positions	29
Human Experience and Narrative Inquiry	30
Narrative Meaning	31
Narrative and Identity	32
The Role of the Researcher in Narrative Construction	33
Researcher’s Subjectivity	33
Participant Recruitment and Criteria	34
Ethical Considerations	35
Dual-Roles	35
Contract Between the Researcher and Participant.....	36
Informed Consent	36
Benefit and Risk of Participation.....	38
Data Collection	39
Data Analysis	42
Data Representation	43
CHAPTER FOUR: NARRATIVE REPRESENTATION OF RESULTS	45

Andrea's Story	46
Childhood and Early Life Experiences	46
Young Womanhood and Leaving the Farm.....	48
The Journey into Life as a Woman Corrections Worker	49
Becoming a Woman Corrections Worker.....	50
Being a Woman Corrections Worker	57
Andrea's Diary	58
Andrea's Story Epilogue	90
Summary	91
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY THEMES	92
Summary	92
Themes and Meaning for Women Working In Men's Corrections	93
Defying Tradition.....	93
The Asset of Women Corrections Workers	94
Women Surviving and Thriving in the Corrections Environment.....	98
Proving Themselves.....	99
Be Professional, Do Your Job, Know Your Job	100
Finding Their Strengths and Knowing Their Limitations	101
Good Old Boy's Club	103
Dual Identity: Corrections Worker First, Woman Second.....	106
Zero Harassment Tolerance?.....	111
Equal Opportunity Harassment.....	113
Being Broken Down.....	116
...Building Themselves Back Up	119
Changes for the Worse?	120

CHAPTER SIX: INTEGRETION OF FINDINGS WITH THE CURRENT LITERATURE....	123
CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND STUDY STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS.....	129
Implications for Women Corrections Workers	129
Implications for Future Research	130
Strengths and Limitations of the Study	131
Epilogue	132
REFERENCES	134
APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE EMAIL POSTER.....	141
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM	142
APPENDIX C: TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM.....	145
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE	146
APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIBER DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY FORM	148
APPENDIX F: GUIDELINES FOR DIARY ENTRIES.....	149

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I did not come to be interested in the experiences of women working in men's correctional facilities by chance. I am living this experience. For seven years I have worked as a corrections worker in a men's correctional facility. When people I meet find out that I work in a men's correctional facility their first reaction is usually one of awe. They often ask, "What is it like?" usually followed by a variation of "I bet you have some interesting stories to tell!" People are curious about the challenges I face and how I deal with them. They want to know how I came to be in this position and why I would want to work in such an environment.

I have always had an interest in human behavior and why people do the things they do. What factors influence one person to lead a positive lifestyle, and even more fascinating for me, what causes a person to engage in criminal behavior? There was something that pulled me towards the criminal justice environment, both in my studies and in my personal life. While my friends and family would watch television dramas I would watch *Dateline NBC* and *48 Hours Mysteries*. In my study of psychology I was drawn to classes that had a basis in criminal psychology and human behavior. There was something mysterious about the criminal justice system and I was interested in learning more about it. When I saw the job posting for the position of corrections worker at a jail for men I decided to apply. Having recently graduated with a Bachelors degree in Psychology I needed to enter the "real world." Working in corrections offered a competitive wage and benefits, and this was my first job that had the potential to be a career. I also believed working in corrections would be valuable experience towards my future endeavors of becoming a psychologist. Like most people, before setting foot inside the correctional facility where I am employed, my only understanding of prison or jail experience came from what I saw in the media. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I have had my share of difficulties in working this job. I have experienced harassment at the hands of inmates and shifts filled with conflict. I have also had days where I have had the rewarding feeling of knowing I helped someone, even if only in a small way. When I walk through the doors at the beginning of a shift I never really know what experience awaits. In reflecting on my own experiences, I had often wondered about the experiences of the women I work with. If asked to describe their experiences, what stories they would tell? Would their stories be similar to or

different than my own? Specifically, what are the experiences of women corrections workers employed in a men's correctional facility?

Summary of the Literature

Corrections is not the only traditionally male dominated career where women have struggled to enter into and establish themselves in, but it is one of the most powerful examples, as corrections very much embodies a masculine image of strength and prowess (Belknap, 1991). Women were not welcome in this environment, and only because of the political forces of human rights issues and a change in the focus of corrections to rehabilitative efforts were they able to move into men's facilities (Jurik, 1985). The major reasons there was resistance to hiring women to work in men's institutions were concerns about their safety, institutional security, the privacy concerns of men inmates, and the effect that women may have on the behavior of men offenders. Women were viewed as both physically and emotionally weaker than men, and therefore less able to withstand the emotional strain of working in corrections, or to be able to handle physical confrontation (Jurik, 1985). Once women were hired into men's centers they faced additional barriers and challenges to their rights to be there. Women were subjected to negative appraisal of their capabilities and competence. Women were also seen as "fair game" for workplace abuse including verbal, physical, or sexual abuse from male co-workers. The difficulties faced by women corrections workers have been reported as a persistent source of job related stress, which left women more vulnerable to psychological and physiological disorders. Due to women having been more likely to experience harassment and stress in the correctional environment, their capabilities and competence to work in the corrections field was challenged (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

Due to the traditionally smaller number of women employed in corrections, their job performance tended to be more closely observed and subjected to scrutiny by male peers. Women corrections officers have reported feeling that greater attention was paid to errors made by women staff, and there was more concern around the errors made by women officers when compared to men officers (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). The different perception of performance of women corrections workers was found to manifest in less opportunity for job promotion and poorer evaluations of job performance (Farnworth, 1992; Jurik, 1985). Women corrections workers reported feeling judged as a "gender class" rather than individuals (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). While women were perceived as having skills that were valuable to the job, such as verbal

and written skills, along with having a normalizing effect on the corrections environment, there were still many that held the belief that women could not handle themselves physically on the job (Belknap, 1991; Lawrence & Mahan, 1998; Newbold, 2005; Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Women reported feeling judged on the job by male standards; consequently they felt the skills they brought to the job were underutilized and depreciated (Cadwaladr, 1993).

Study Rational

Completing this study was important for the literature on women corrections workers and for me as a researcher. For most individuals the day-to-day experience of working in a correctional facility is largely a mystery. Being a woman working in a men's correctional facility is an even more foreign experience. As I am both a woman corrections worker and student researcher, I was in the unique position of being able to include myself as a participant in this study as a means of sharing my personal experiences. This study aimed to contribute to the literature about the experiences of women corrections workers: both qualitatively and in a current time. Past research on women as corrections workers has been quantitative in nature, focused on the differences between men and women in this role in areas such as stress, correctional orientation (i.e., punitive, rehabilitative), job satisfaction, job perception, demographic characteristics, and correctional staff attitudes toward women corrections workers (Farnworth, 1992; Hemmens, Stohr, Schoeler, & Miller, 2002). Very few of these studies described these experiences and challenges from the perspective of the women living them. Research to date has shown that women corrections workers faced many challenges not experienced by their male colleagues. Relative to men, women corrections workers have been found to experience many challenges on the job: increased stress, challenges with integration into the workforce, role conflict, gender stereotyping, increased performance expectations, resistance from male inmates and staff, negative expectations regarding their abilities by co-workers, and denial of on the job training and socialization. Giving women corrections workers a "voice" in which to share their experiences was important to having a realistic understanding of their experiences. By giving a voice to those who have typically been excluded from mainstream research we are able to identify the meaning of experience for these individuals and are able to construct new ways of understanding their experience (Lyons, 2011). An understanding of the experiences of women corrections workers could not be achieved without their participation in allowing an expression of their experience to be known. According to Campbell and Bunting

(1991), women should be viewed as the experts on their own lives, and their experience is a valid source of knowledge.

Understanding the experiences of women corrections workers also has implications for the corrections field as far as potential policy development, staff support, and safety. More women are working in the corrections field than ever before. For example, at the provincial correctional facility where the participants in this study are employed, 45% of the approximately 300 corrections workers on staff are women (Government of Saskatchewan, 2013).

Understanding the challenges experienced by women could aid in setting up support systems to help women staff deal with stress and challenges. This could help staff to be more effective and be better able to deal with at work challenges. Creating a positive unified staff environment where women staff are supported and free from harassment and discrimination promotes trust between staff and is integral to institutional safety (Hemmens et al., 2002).

Additionally, the majority of the studies on women corrections workers' experiences took place when a woman entering the corrections field was less common. Now that women are prominent in these areas, this is no longer a controversial or marginalized topic. Furthermore, little research was available on if or how the experiences of women working in the correctional environment have changed over the years. It was largely unknown if women were still experiencing the same types of issues nearly 20 to 30 years after the bulk of the research in this area was conducted. The available literature was particularly lacking a qualitative perspective that described the actual experiences of women corrections workers employed in a men's correctional facility as described by them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of women corrections workers employed in a men's correctional facility in an in-depth manner. Detailed qualitative descriptions of the experiences of women working in men's correctional facilities have largely been ignored in the literature. I chose to do this through narrative inquiry, as it was a means of investigating not only the experiences of women corrections workers but also the meanings attributed to these experiences. By using narrative inquiry and allowing my participants to voice their stories, I hoped that they would be left with a feeling of empowerment.

Research Question

This study used narrative analysis to answer my research question: what is it like being a woman corrections worker employed in a men's correctional facility?

Overview of Chapters

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one was an introduction to the current study, including my personal interest in the topic, the rationale for completing the study, applicable definitions, and the research question that guided this study. Chapter two includes a review of past literature on women corrections workers, including their history in men's correctional facilities and the difficulties women have faced in trying to establish themselves in this traditionally male dominated profession. Chapter three outlines the research methodology used for this study, including an overview of narrative inquiry and why I felt narrative inquiry was an appropriate methodology for examining the experiences of women corrections workers. Chapter four is a narrative representation of the study results. This appears as a composite narrative depicting the experiences of my participants and myself as women corrections workers employed in a men's facility. Chapter five is a discussion of the themes derived from the interview and diary data, which guided the creation of the composite narrative. Chapter six is an integration of the current literature with the study findings. The final chapter in this thesis, chapter seven, is a discussion of the implications of this study on women corrections workers and the facilities where they are employed and suggests areas for future research.

Definitions

This study included women corrections workers employed in a men's correctional facility in a mid-size prairie city. The men's correctional facility in question is an adult male (18 years of age and older) correctional facility that houses both remanded and sentenced offenders. Remanded offenders are those offenders waiting for court appearances on a variety of charges, ranging from minor offences to serious violent offences such as murder. Sentenced offenders are those offenders who have been sentenced in court to jail time. This men's correctional facility houses those sentenced offenders who are serving sentences of less than two years; offenders sentenced to longer than two years are transferred to federal institutions (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009).

A corrections worker (CW) for the purpose of this study is an individual who fulfills the dual responsibility of case management and security for adult male offenders leading to their

successful reintegration into the community (Government of Saskatchewan, 2007). Other terms that may be used to describe this role in related research are correctional officers, prison guards, prison officers, jail officers, deputies, and correctional staff (Farnworth, 1992; Griffin, 2006; Hemmens et al., 2002; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997; Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the literature on women working in men's correctional facilities. I begin with a review of the struggles women have faced in seeking employment in traditionally male dominated careers, particularly in the corrections field. I provide a description of the nature of corrections work, as the experiences of women CWs need to be understood within that context. I discuss the challenges of working in a sexualized workplace and how being a woman CW can affect the formation of one's identity. Men CWs' attitudes and documented behaviors towards their women counterparts are discussed as most prior literature has focused on this area. Literature regarding the harassment of women CWs and the mental health implications of working in the corrections environment for women is also reviewed.

Women Working in Traditionally Male Dominated Careers

Historically women have faced both legislative and political barriers in the fight for equality in the work force. Women who enter traditionally male dominated fields face additional challenges resulting from informal barriers that regulate their behaviors and numbers in jobs that are considered "men's work." Informal barriers can be described as the behaviors and practices that seek to maintain the differences between men and women and prevent the full integration of women into the workplace such as workplace harassment and limitations on female roles in the workplace (Zimmer, 1989). Employment in the fields of corrections, law enforcement, and the military have been particularly difficult for women to establish themselves in, as these fields have traditionally been associated with masculine characteristics such as aggression and the ability to use physical force (Belknap, 1991).

Women in Law Enforcement

Belknap (1991) stated that resistance to women entering traditionally male dominated careers may be most apparent in the criminal justice system, as these jobs are so closely associated with the idea of masculinity. Harrington (2003) described the challenges she faced as a woman joining the police force in the 1960s. At this time women were not allowed to be hired as "patrolmen" and were classified as "policewomen." This separate classification served to perpetuate discrimination against women. Women applying to the police force were required to have college degrees while men were only required to have a high-school equivalency certificate.

Female officers were also paid 6% less than male officers to do the same job. Women were assigned to their own division and were ineligible for transfers out of this division or any promotional opportunities, which were outside this division.

As in corrections, legal and political requirements have eliminated many of the policy barriers that faced women when entering policing. There has also been a similar shift in policies, which have evolved to include goals and qualities that are considered more stereotypically feminine, such as emphasizing positive relationships between police and the community. Skills such as problem solving and interpersonal communication skills are now seen as more desirable than physical prowess (Dejong, 2004). Women are still largely underrepresented in many police forces. In the United States in 2001, only 13% of police officers were women. Harrington (2003) described a *tokenism* in the police force that is similar to what women in corrections and other traditionally male dominated occupations face. Small numbers of women employed in these contexts means that job errors and mistakes are noticed and one cannot fade into the background.

Studies on women holding jobs in non-traditional roles such as police officers, probation officers, and deputies also found that women in these positions experienced more stress than their male counterparts. Hochschild (1989) described a stress-inducing phenomenon that women may face caused by the *second shift*. After working in a stressful environment during the day, women were more likely than men to fulfill household and childcare duties once at home. Hochschild examined studies in the 1960s and 1970s on the time required for women to be employed in a paid job while still completing housework and childcare duties. He found, on average, that women worked nearly fifteen hours longer each week than men.

He, Zhao, and Archbold (2002) found that women police officers experienced significantly more stress than men officers. Women were found to have higher levels of stress on two indices that measured psychological and physical stress. Measures of depression and somatization were higher in women police officers than their male counterparts. Somatization referred to psychological stress manifesting itself in physical health dysfunction. Typical complaints were focused on the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, and respiratory systems along with muscular aches and pains. Depression referred to the presence of clinical depression symptoms such as loss of interest, dysphoric mood, decrease in energy, and lack of motivation.

Levels of anxiety, which were measured through reports of restlessness, nervousness, and panic attacks, were found not to differ between men and women officers.

Women in the Military

Women entering the military have faced similar challenges regarding their inclusion and equality. In the past, women were prohibited from combat positions and certain assignments within the military. Similar to women in corrections, the denial of experience gained by fulfilling multiple positions and roles denied women the requisite experience they would need to further themselves within the organization. It was not until 1979 that there became petitions to remove the restriction preventing women from participating in combat situations (Benecke & Dodge, 1990). Women in the military also faced many informal barriers implemented by others within the organization that prevented them from attaining recognition in the organization. Like women in corrections, women in the military have been subjected to sexual harassment by their male counterparts, and have faced unwarranted assumptions regarding sexual orientation. Benecke and Dodge (1990) described the practice of *lesbian-baiting*, which referred to the practice of pressuring and harassing women by calling them lesbians or threatening to call them lesbians. When this research was being conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, homosexuality was viewed as incompatible with military policy and accusations of such could jeopardize an individual's career. Accusations and harassment about sexual orientation were viewed as a way to control women's presence and behavior within the military service. Women who turned down unwanted sexual advances of male servicemen were often subjected to allegations of being a lesbian. There was an eruption of investigations and subsequent discharges of women accused of being involved in suspected lesbian activities. Many military women at this time chose to voluntarily discharge themselves, or resign, rather than face the risky process of an investigation of homosexual conduct, which could lead to criminal charges. While the military did not distinguish between men and women homosexual activity, women were found to have a discharge rate that was 10 times greater than their male counterparts.

The Nature of Corrections Work

Lambert, Paoline, Hogan, and Baker (2007) described corrections work as a unique experience. Working in corrections is considered difficult and dangerous. It can often be a routine and calm job that is interspersed with periods of crisis. According to Cadwaladr (1993):

Jails have a particular culture and are typified by a potential for violence, conflict, isolation, a paramilitary hierarchy, boredom and a lack of prestige. The circumstances of women guards must be understood in the context of working in a jail. (p. 4)

Cadwaladr made an important point, as most of our understanding of what a correctional facility is like stems from how it is portrayed in the media. The media has a tendency to portray the most sensational aspects of jail and prison life, often emphasizing riots, hostage takings, escapes, or allegations of undue physical force against offenders. As a woman guard, Cadwaladr noted that none of the literature or media stories corresponded with her own experience as a woman guard.

Cadwaladr (1993) stated that the work of a prison guard can be divided into three general types of tasks: life maintenance (e.g., issuing clothing and food), social relations (e.g., managing relations between inmates and guards, professionals, and other inmates), and tasks of security matters (e.g., surveillance, searching, and use of physical force). Cadwaladr noted that the skills required to perform these different types of tasks are not sex-typed - both men and women can perform them. The use of force is the only task where women may be viewed as being at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts due to their size and strength. The practice in jails and prisons is that officers do not respond to emergency situations alone. Responding in a group is a commonly practiced strategy that serves to intimidate offenders into compliance. As inmates typically outnumber staff in many areas of the jail, in the event of an emergency involving a single individual, an officer of either sex would be in a dangerous position (Cadwaladr, 1993).

The History of Women Corrections Workers in Canada

In Canada, the introduction of women guards to men's institutions came in the 1970s. This time was marked by great change in the policies and procedures within corrections environments. Concerns about violence and overcrowding triggered investigations into how conditions could be improved in many jails and prisons. At that time many prisons were reported to be quite archaic and in appalling condition. Instances of hostage takings, riots, and disturbances were common. Resulting investigations and inquiries yielded recommendations on how corrections could be improved in Canada. Prisons and jails became progressively more bureaucratized. Greater concern was given to policy around inmate rights, instilling professionalism amid staff, and a shift to the recruitment of younger and more educated individuals (Cadwaladr, 1993).

In Canada, the enactment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 affected both the corrections system and the employment of women. This act affected the employment of women in corrections in two ways. First, the barriers against discriminatory hiring practices were challenged in the courts. Women fought discrimination that was keeping them from well paying and sometimes esteemed male jobs. There was a realization that there were far greater employment opportunities for men because there were more men's prisons, CWs at men's institutions were paid more, and more promotional opportunities were available because of the wide range of experience gained by working in men's institutions (Farkas & Rand, 1997). Second, challenges from inmates about civil rights influenced changes in policy and practice, which became less punitive and more rehabilitative. Women were reputed to be more caring and empathetic and thus well suited to a more rehabilitative environment (Jurik, 1985). This shift de-emphasized the use of physical means of offender control and emphasized a focus on service. Programs that would aid offender rehabilitation such as advancing education, vocational training, counselling, and other recreational activities became more available. A rehabilitative focus caused employers to seek employees who were skilled in providing services (i.e., counselling and communication skills), which are stereotypically viewed as more "feminine" within society (Jurik, 1985). From these changes policy makers decided to hire women to work in men's prisons and jails, as it was seen as an inexpensive way of showing an effort towards solving some of the problems in prisons and jails (Ekstedt & Griffiths, 1988). By 1983, all federal correctional facilities in Canada, which housed men offenders, employed women correctional officers. Belknap (1991) stated that the two most common reasons women chose to become employed in corrections was the draw of wages and benefits, and as a means of gaining experience to enter policing. Other identified reasons for entering into corrections were the possibility of advancement opportunities, a belief that the role would be interesting and challenging, and prior work experience in the justice system.

The decision to hire women to work in men's prisons and jails was opposed by many in the correctional organization and was even considered foolish. The major reasons that there was resistance to hiring women to work in men's institutions were concerns about their safety and security, the privacy concerns of male inmates, and the effect that women may have on the behavior of male offenders (Farkas & Rand, 1997; Jurik, 1985). Women were viewed as both physically and emotionally weaker than men, and therefore less able to withstand the emotional

strain of working in corrections and to be able to handle physical confrontation. Women were also viewed as at risk of being raped by sexually deprived offenders. It was thought that employing women would increase the workload of male staff, as they would be unable to conduct necessary strip searches (Farnworth, 1992). Women were also viewed as being susceptible to becoming intimately involved with offenders. Most men CWs and prison administrators either had concerns about women working in men's institutions or they were strongly opposed (Farkas & Rand, 1997; Jurik, 1985; Newbold, 2005).

The right to be employed in men's institutions was just the beginning of women's fight to be considered and treated as equals to their male counterparts. Jurik (1985) stated that although corrections employers had implemented policies regarding equal opportunities for work for men and women, there were no formal policies regarding the placement of women in particular work areas within men's jails. Job assignments for women officers were assigned as those that were "appropriate" for a woman to have, such as clerical positions, working in the mailroom, and control room assignments (Jurik, 1985). Women were not assigned to positions where they were viewed to be at a higher risk than their male counterparts or a potential security threat. Restricting the assignments that women CWs received meant limiting promotional opportunities because women CWs did not receive experience interacting with male offenders (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998; Zimmer, 1989). Some men CWs also began to resent what was viewed as special treatment for women staff because of their preferential shift placements (Jurik, 1985).

Working In a Sexualized Workplace

According to Pogrebin and Poole (1997), the sexualized workplace is maintained through the interaction of several factors including structural components and cultural themes and processes. Structural components come from the corrections environment and include occupational segregation, power hierarchies, and the tokenism of women staff. Cultural themes and processes are present in society and include occupational norms, gender-based stereotypes, and status inequality (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). Pogrebin and Poole stated that the sex-typing of certain jobs is subjective and follows a simple rule - men and women are different and they should do different things. Stereotypical thinking has perpetuated the stigmatization of individuals who violate sex-type norms in the workplace, which in turn, strengthens these sex-type roles. Sex-role stereotypes function to keep women in secondary and supportive roles instead of roles of authority, independence, and accomplishment. Women who have challenged

these sex-roles have faced difficulties in the workplace. Women have been subjected to negative appraisal of their capabilities and competence when trying to break the barriers of sex-roles in the workplace. Negative evaluation of women's performance can be seen as a sanctioning of deviance from occupational norms, which is a method of social control to keep the male and female workplace differentiated (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997).

Pogrebin and Poole (1997) conducted semi-structured interviews with women CWs employed in seven prisons and jails and analyzed the themes presented around working in a sexualized environment. They found that several consequences have been found to occur in situations where there is perceived deviance of female occupational norms. There is an increased consciousness of the deviant woman. She is likely to be restricted, undervalued, and punished for what is considered deviant behavior. Men may also view a woman who is in violation of occupational sex norms as deserving whatever happens to her as a result. Women have been seen as "fair game" for workplace abuse including verbal, physical, or sexual abuse from male co-workers (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997).

The women CWs in Pogrebin and Poole's (1997) study were found to have experienced harassment around being sexual objects and inferior staff. The sexualizing of the work environment was seen as a way for male staff to exert power and dominance. Women CWs were also at risk for harassment and attempts to diminish their authority from male offenders, as they were likely to view women staff as more easily intimidated. Harassment from inmates was also often of a sexual nature. Due to women being more likely to experience harassment and stress in the correctional environment, their capabilities and competence to work in the corrections field was challenged (Hemmens et al., 2002; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). In the past, when women CWs had received promotion or choice assignments they were perceived by male staff as not having earned it. Women were the subject of jokes and teasing around having earned the promotion through sexual favors in return for advancement (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

Women working in corrections have had their femininity and sexual preference questioned both by male staff and offenders. Pogrebin and Poole (1998) analyzed semi-structured interviews of women employed in seven prisons and jails about challenges they face working in men's facilities. The women reported commonly experiencing comments about one's appearance, speculation around one's sexual preference, or sexual innuendoes from male staff and inmates. Male inmates have used this strategy as a way to intimidate or manipulate women

CWs. Sexual comments from prisoners were also used as a way to test women staff for possible weaknesses that can be exploited. Sexual comments to women CWs were often made in front of other offenders as a means of diminishing the authority of the women officers. Women have been held responsible for the harassing behaviors of male inmates and told they need to develop a “thick skin” in order to work in prisons (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

Corrections Work and The Woman Identity

Gutek and Morasch (1982) explained some possible reasons for the difficulties women CWs have had in fulfilling a traditionally male dominated role. Their term *sex-role spillover* described the carryover of gender-based expectations around behavior into the workplace. Sex-role spillover is the result of men seeing women as women first and their working role as secondary. Gutek and Morasch proposed three possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, gender identity may be a more rudimentary cognitive category than one’s work role. For example, a person is often seen as a man or woman first and as a CW second. There may be an expectation that CWs should perform in a way that is consistent with the sex-role of the majority (i.e., men). Deviance from these expected behaviors has been viewed as inappropriate, as was seen in Farnworth’s (1992) study where the women officer’s strategy of using verbal interventions for potentially violent situations was regarded as less positive than the physical interventions from men officers. Second, women may feel more secure in roles that are stereotypically female, especially if they feel they will only be accepted by men in a female role. A third explanation was that men are more accustomed to interacting with women in a role that is different from work roles and may deal with women in the manner of their traditional role relationships such as wife and mother. From this perspective men may be more likely to perceive sexuality in ambiguous behaviors between men and women in the workplace and to feel that such sexuality is acceptable. Examples of such behaviors include men CWs feeling they need to protect women staff and the sexual undertones of harassing behaviors and comments towards women officers (Farnworth, 1992).

Gender Model vs. Job Model

It has been documented that women working in traditionally male dominated careers such as the corrections field may experience difficulty in reconciling the expectations around gender roles and the demands of the job (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Zimmer (1986) cited two models of job performance that have been applied to men and women and their manner of working. The

gender model suggested that the characteristics women bring to their work in terms of prior experiences, attitudes, and methods of interacting affect their occupational experience. The *job model* suggested that the differences seen between women and men on the job are driven by the nature of the job and how the work environment is structured. Pogrebin and Poole (1998) found that the women CWs in their study tended to conform to the gender model. They stated that several of the difficulties women CWs experienced were related to balancing sex-role expectations and the demands of the job. Women and men in the correctional environment are caught in what Pogrebin and Poole called a *double bind*. Male officers demand physical strength and toughness from their co-workers but stereotypically women are not supposed to possess these characteristics. Women may be viewed as more effective and competent if they behave more like a man and less like a woman, which in turn could threaten the masculinity of male co-workers. However, if a woman officer uses more stereotypically feminine skills, she risks being viewed as unfit to work in the correctional environment (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). This difficulty faced by women CWs has been found to be a persistent source of job related stress, which can leave women more vulnerable to psychological and physiological disorders. Employees who may feel or know they are being judged as inadequate on the job may experience anxiety or increased sensitivity about their job performance. They may react in ways that are seen as inappropriate or attempt to over compensate on the job in an attempt to prove themselves (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

There have been conflicting findings about the influence of the job model or gender model in the way women CWs conduct themselves in the correctional environment. Jenne and Kersting's (1996) study found that women correctional officers responded to hypothetical incidents of confrontational situations with male offenders in a similar manner to their male counterparts. In some situations the women respondents even said they would respond in a more aggressive manner than male respondents. Jenne and Kersting stated that this could reflect that women feel an increased need to "take charge" in some situations as they are traditionally in a subordinate position in men-women interactions. This finding may also have reflected that women corrections officers see some behaviors as direct challenges or tests that they must pass to prove their competence in working with male offenders. Situations in which there is a challenge of authority in front of other offenders may make women correctional officers feel obligated to respond strongly to reestablish authority. The differences seen between men and

women's likelihood to use aggression in certain situations could also reflect that when an aggressive response is expected women may feel more free to use aggression, because they are not held to normal gender expectations in the correctional environment. Women may also feel pressure to use aggression as they may anticipate disapproval for not doing so. Women may also react more aggressively in situations where they feel it is possible they will be aggressed against. This study supported the idea that the occupational socialization a woman corrections officer receives could counter gender differences in that women identify with the job-role first and the gender expectations of a woman second (Jenne & Kersting, 1996).

Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, and Wolfe (1991) also found what they considered support for the job model of socialization in their study of gender and race on correctional officers experiences. Their questionnaire of men and women revealed several racial effects but there was only one area where men and women were found to differ in their responses - the area of supervisory support. The lack of gender differences was seen as indicating the behaviors of women on the job are shaped by their work experiences. It also appears that there could be a combination of both job and gender role influences on how men and women fill the correctional officer role. Belknap (1991) found support for an influence of both the job model and gender model in accounting for the differences seen between men and women correctional officers.

Role Traps

Kanter (1977) described a phenomenon she termed *role encapsulation*, where the dominant group (i.e., men) in the workplace form preexisting generalizations about token individuals (i.e., women) rather than recognizing individual characteristics. According to Kanter, men may induct women into informal stereotypical roles they understand and can respond to. Kanter identified several informal stereotype role traps that maintain the differences between women and dominant men in the workplace: *pet*, *seductress*, *mother*, and *iron-maiden*. The pet role described when a woman is viewed as innocent, fragile, and incapable, similar to a younger sister needing a man's protection. The seductress role was viewed as desirable, possibly sexually available, and manipulative. She was viewed as incompetent along with women in the pet role. Women in the mother role were seen as supportive and reprimanding but incapable of making independent decisions. The iron maiden was viewed as competent in her work but also as harsh, asexual, and unfriendly. According to Kanter, assumptions are made about what the token group "must" be like, which forces tokens into limited roles. Kanter stated that:

This constrains the tokens but is useful for dominant group members. Whatever ambiguity there might be around a strange person is reduced by providing a stereotyped and thus familiar place for tokens in the group, allowing dominants to make use of already-learned expectations and modes of action, like the traditional way men expect to treat women. . . . In short, tokens become encapsulated in limited roles that give them the security of a 'place' but constrain their areas of permissible or rewarded action (p. 391). Jobs that traditionally identify with male qualities make women more vulnerable to these negative role traps (Jurik, 1988).

Jurik (1988) examined the perceptions of women CWs according to the stereotypical role traps described by Kanter (1977) through interviews with 20 women CWs and 10 men CWs. It was found that many of the women on the job were viewed according to the characteristics of the role traps. Many women were viewed as being too trusting towards offenders and physically incapable of completing the CW job filling the pet role. Women who were friendly towards their men supervisors and co-workers were at risk of being viewed in the seductress role. The seductress was viewed as an incompetent staff member but that she used her seductiveness to further her career opportunities. The seductress role was also negative in that they were viewed as women who could get intimately involved with an offender. When avoiding the pet and seductress roles a woman may fall into the iron maiden role. Women who work hard to try to prove their capabilities and value in the corrections workplace can be viewed as unfriendly and be distrusted and isolated by their co-workers. Many women corrections officers also served in the mother role in that they acted as nurturers to staff and male inmates by offering advice, listening to problems, and reprimanding when needed. While the mother role was not viewed as negatively as the other roles, it was still a role trap. Women who fulfilled the mother role could avoid being labeled as a seductress but the over-protectiveness seen with the role was viewed as a security risk in the institution (Jurik, 1988).

According to Jurik (1988) in order to be viewed competently in their work women officers attempted to avoid these role traps. The women in Jurik's study identified a feeling of pressure to try to balance their images between these negative stereotypes. To avoid role traps and negative stereotypes the women in the study identified five common strategies. These were portraying a professional image, showing unique skills, emphasizing a team environment, using humor, and positive visibility. The women identified a professional image as being accustomed

to the institutional rules and routine and applying the rules in a consistent, assertive, and courteous manner to both inmates and other staff. Portraying a professional image helped women avoid the incompetent images of the pet and seductress roles. According to Jurik, by demonstrating a unique skill, women officers can possibly enhance promotional opportunities and can enhance their visibility in the institution in a way that is less threatening to their male counterparts in that they are not trying to take over “a man’s job.”

Women who attempted to be as aggressive as men officers were viewed as iron maidens, while women who appeared incompetent in physical altercations were seen as pets. A strategy for avoiding either negative role was to take advantage of opportunities to assist other staff in altercations with offenders (Jurik, 1988). Assisting other staff helped develop camaraderie and the need to help each other. The use of humor was also a common tool identified by women officers. Women who appeared unfriendly by their co-workers were at risk of being viewed in the iron maiden role trap. Jurik stated that humor can be used in several situations encountered by women corrections officers. It helps to establish a sense of camaraderie with fellow co-workers and can be used to stop unwanted sexual advances and sexist comments. Though humor was a common identified strategy in Jurik’s study it was found to be ineffective in some situations such as in the case of serious harassment from co-workers.

Sponsorship, as described by forming a relationship with someone who is viewed positively in the correctional organization was another strategy that the women reported using in the attempt to avoid negative stereotypes (Jurik, 1988). However, maintaining too close of a relationship with a male sponsor in the workplace can be problematic for women in that it can lead to rumors about the dynamics of the relationship as being sexual leading to the seductress role trap. According to Jurik (1988), despite the efforts and applied strategies of women officers to avoid negative stereotypes and role traps many women were unsuccessful in avoiding them and were left with the stress of trying to balance these different roles in order to be accepted in the workplace (Jurik, 1988).

Unique Challenges Experienced by Women Corrections Workers

Zimmer (1986) (see also Farnworth, 1992; Pogrebin and Poole, 1997) stated that working as a woman CW in a men’s prison is unique as a non-traditional role. This type of work is qualitatively different as violence is prevalent, and it is seen as a highly male stereotyped role that requires attributes considered characteristically male - such as authoritativeness, dominance,

and aggressiveness. Other traits, such as physical strength and the readiness to use physical force, are viewed as essential job skills that are assumed to be masculine. Characteristics stereotypically associated with women such as sensitivity, nurturing, and understanding are seen as unnecessary and even harmful to the work environment (Farnworth, 1992; Griffin, 2006; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997; Zimmer, 1986).

Farnworth (1992) interviewed men and women corrections officers about the role of gender in a men's prison and the integration difficulties of women officers. Many women in Farnworth's study felt that when it came to violent events in the correctional facility, male employees prevented them from doing their job. During violent incidents women CWs were forced to take a supportive role. Men CWs communicated that they felt obligated to undertake a protective role over women staff. This practice deprives women the opportunity to prove to both themselves and their male counterparts that they can be of assistance when encountering violent situations and denies them the additional training that men benefit from. This limits women staff the opportunity to gain experience and confidence in the use of their physical skills on the job, and reinforces the belief that women are unable to function effectively in a violent situation (Farnworth, 1992; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997).

When women are denied the opportunity to participate in the resolution of physical situations with offenders, they are limited to the use of their social skills as a means of gaining control (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). The belief that women CWs are unable to effectively handle physical confrontation implies that violent situations are inevitable and that the only way to handle these situations is through physical force. Women CWs are perceived as possessing verbal skills that are valuable in deescalating potentially violent situations before they start. In Farnworth's (1992) study it was found that women and men corrections officers used different strategies to handle similar situations. Though women were able achieve the same outcome as men corrections officers using different means in potentially violent situations, in Farnworth's study their job performance was evaluated as less positive than their male counterparts. Some male officers believed that women did not complete a job of equal value. The different response of women to violence in the correctional environment was often understood by other staff to indicate an unwillingness or ineffectiveness to handle aggressive situations (Jenne & Kersting, 1996). Women corrections officers however believed that the threat and intimidation strategy that men corrections officers often use further exacerbates offender control problems by

challenging the offender's manhood and image escalating the situation (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

Due to the traditionally smaller number of women, the job performance of women CWs has tended to be more closely observed and subject to scrutiny by male peers (Farnworth, 1992; Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Women officers felt that greater attention was paid to errors made by women staff and there was more concern around the errors made by women officers when compared to men officers. The different perception of performance of women corrections officers was found to manifest in less opportunity for job promotion and poorer evaluations of job performance (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Women corrections officers reported feeling judged as a gender class rather than individuals. Negative performance by one woman affected how other women working in the institution were viewed (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Women corrections officers reported feeling additional pressure and stress as a result of their job performance being more closely monitored. They also felt they were constantly having to prove themselves both as women and as correctional officers (Farnworth, 1992; Pogrebin & Poole, 1998; Zimmer, 1986).

How Men Corrections Workers View Women Staff

It appears that male CWs' attitudes towards women staff may have become more positive (Carlson, Thomas, & Anson, 2004; Hemmens et al., 2002). Hemmens et al. (2002) conducted a survey of men and women corrections staff at prisons for men and women and found the overall perception of women staff to be positive. Most of the staff surveyed recognized that gender and sexual harassment behaviors were unacceptable in their place of employment. This included jokes, personal comments, putdowns, and sexual relations between staff and inmates. Though there may have been some advancements in attitude towards women corrections staff in men's institutions, Hemmens et al. described women in corrections as making "one giant step up . . . and at least two steps back" (p. 486) when old attitudes surrounding women's capabilities are apparent in some individual male staff members and taint the opinion of what women are capable of in doing corrections work. Hemmens et al. found that the age of the men CWs impacted their perceptions of their women counterparts. Older male staff members were found to have the least confidence in women staffs' ability to do the job. This finding was unsurprising as older men are thought to hold more traditional views of the ability of women and the roles of women in society. Though Hemmens et al. found some positive changes regarding the views of

women in men's institutions; the male staff still rated the ability of women staff to work with inmates as lower than women staff rated their own abilities. This finding was similar to what Farnworth (1992) had found ten years previous.

Lawrence and Mahan (1998) conducted a survey of men and women corrections officers in men's prisons about gender differences. Lawrence and Mahan found that although most men respondents agreed with the hiring of women corrections officers there were still concerns about the abilities of women staff. Most of the male respondents perceived women staff as being in more danger on the job. Men CWs have been found to believe that women CWs possessing stereotypically feminine qualities such as being weak, fearful, and seductive would place themselves and male staff in danger (Jurik, 1985). Despite these concerns, there has been no evidence of increased assaults on corrections staff with the introduction of women staff into men's prisons (Lawrence & Mahan, 1998). Lawrence and Mahan also described an informal inmate code of chivalry in that fellow inmates held those inmates who assaulted women and children in lower regard. This finding suggested that women could actually be less likely to be violently assaulted than men correctional officers. Carlson et al. (2004) conducted a survey of men and women correctional officers in order to explore the differences between men and women on the job. Carlson and colleagues found that the majority of men corrections officers in their study were not concerned with the physical abilities of their women counterparts to offer physical support in an emergency situation.

In Farnworth's (1992) interview study, a senior woman corrections officer stated that in order to understand why men corrections officers oppose women corrections officers, one needs to examine the situation from their perspective. Beliefs about the corrections officer role can come from tradition passed through the prison system or from one's personal life. If a woman can do the job it is a threat both to their masculinity and in that a woman may take their job.

What Can Women Bring to Corrections?

In Lawrence and Mahan's (1998) survey of men and women corrections officers, the majority of male respondents agreed that women corrections officers were effective at writing reports, supervising male inmates, maintaining personal control in stressful situations, and controlling confrontations of a verbal manner with male inmates. Additionally, Carlson et al. found that women corrections officers were rated as being more effective in counselling and supervising offenders by their male counterparts than the men rated themselves. Male officers

also perceived women officers as having a *normalizing effect* on the environment inside prison making it more similar to life outside of prison for offenders (Carlson et al., 2004). Newbold (2005) stated that many offenders committing crimes such as rape and domestic violence hold attitudes towards women that are archaic in nature in that they fail to recognize women's civil or sexual rights. Incarcerating male offenders in environments where exposure to women is limited and where these attitudes are unchallenged is detrimental. An important part of rehabilitation efforts of male offenders is to challenge anti-social values and exposing male offenders to women as positive authoritative role models is valuable in the rehabilitative process (Newbold, 2005).

How Women Corrections Workers View Themselves

In their survey of men and women correctional officers, Carlson et al. (2004) found that some of the negative attitudes about the abilities of women corrections officers came from the women themselves. They found that women corrections officers viewed men corrections officers as being better able to supervise and counsel both men and women offenders. Additionally, the men corrections officers in the study were more accepting of women corrections officers working in men's facilities than were the women CWs (Carlson et al., 2004).

Rader (2007) interviewed women correctional officers about how they viewed other women working in corrections. All the respondents in the study described themselves in a positive manner (i.e., tough, fair, and professional) but only two of the twelve participants described other women in a positive manner. Five negative typologies were identified based on the interview data. These were the *weak/incapable officer*, the *flirty/sexual officer*, the *resistant officer*, the *overly friendly with inmates officer*, and the *gossiping officer*. Characteristics of the weak/incapable officer were those women described as overly feminine, emotional, naïve, mentally unprepared for the job, and physically incapable of handling inmates. The flirty/sexual officer was described as a woman who showed more interest in flirting with male staff members and receiving compliments from offenders than working effectively on the job. This type of officer was spoken about with great hostility from the women participants. The women indicated that officers who resembled this type were not accepted or respected by their co-workers. Similar to the research on men's attitudes, some of the women in the study viewed some women officers as having received promotional opportunities as a result of using their sexuality as power (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). The resistant woman officer was described as someone who refused

to listen to jokes and comments of a sexual nature by male co-workers. The resistant officer was described as having feminist undertones and would not allow for the sexualization of women. Interestingly, the other women in the study also viewed these women negatively. Resistant women were viewed as problematic as they took joking around too seriously. Some women viewed being present while sexual jokes were made as indicative of acceptance and inclusion from men officers. The overly friendly with inmates officer was described as an officer who has too strong of a relationship with inmates. This could be either through a motherly role or through friendship. The women participants discussed this type of officer negatively and believed that other staff, supervisors, and even offenders view officers who take on the mother or friend role negatively. Women who were described as the gossiping officer were also viewed negatively, as this type of woman officer is untrustworthy and therefore ineffective (Rader, 2007).

The women in Rader's (2007) study viewed other women officers negatively and as being different from themselves. Women officers who were seen as fitting into one of the described typologies were seen as making the role of woman corrections officer more difficult. First, they felt it made it more difficult to gain the respect of men corrections officers. The women in the study felt that it was hard work to gain respect from their male counterparts because they were consistently compared to women who were less proficient. Women who fit these typologies were seen as giving women in the corrections field a "bad name." Second, the participants felt that it was more difficult for male inmates to respect the authority of women corrections officers. It should be noted that gaining the respect of men co-workers was seen as a greater concern than was the effect that women had on maintaining authority over male offenders (Rader, 2007).

Male Inmate's Attitudes about Women Corrections Workers

Cheeseman and Worley (2006) examined male offenders' views of women correctional officer's job competency through a survey of male offenders at prisons of different security ratings (i.e., minimum, medium, and maximum). In this study, minimum-security inmates viewed the competency of women staff as lower than offenders of medium or maximum-security status. There were differences in the demographic characteristics of the offenders housed in the three different units that could account for the differing views of women officer's job competence. The minimum-security offenders in the study were significantly older than the offenders who were in medium or maximum-security status. This may have reflected that older

offenders may be more likely to hold more traditional views on the placement of women in society (Cheeseman & Worley, 2006). Additionally, offenders of a racial minority viewed the competency of women officers as higher than Caucasian offenders. Cheeseman and Worley proposed that offenders of a racial minority may have different views of women due to their own views and experiences with prejudices, or because culturally they may have different beliefs about the roles of women in society. Offenders who viewed women more positively in general, were more likely to perceive women officers as competent on the job. There were also differences in the types of environments the three security levels of offenders lived in which may have contributed to their perceptions of women staff. Minimum-security offenders were more likely to be housed in dormitory or cellblock settings that had less privacy than closed cells in which medium or maximum-security offenders may be housed (Cheeseman & Worley, 2006).

Experience in Dealing with Workplace Harassment

Gender Harassment

Pogrebin and Poole (1997) conducted interviews with women working in seven jails and prisons. The women CWs from all facilities in their study reported instances of verbal harassment from male co-workers to have occurred frequently. The women in the study felt the behavior of the male staff was unacceptable and they experienced differing amounts of strong emotions about the abuse. Some of the women in the study reported that they chose to retaliate against the comments made about them by their men co-workers finding it difficult to cope with continuous harassment. According to Pogrebin and Poole, when men CWs use sexist comments in the workplace towards their women counterparts, it communicates that women are not seen as equals in the corrections profession. The women CWs in the study attributed more problems at work related to working with male staff members than male inmates. Many women refused to report workplace harassment for fear it would make the situation worse for them. One of the difficulties facing women in reporting harassment is that many behaviors do not fit the definition of *sexual harassment*. Much of the harassment experienced by women is not necessarily of a sexual nature and could more appropriately be termed *gender harassment*. Examples of gender harassment are put-downs and comments regarding one's job performance capability or lack of intelligence compared to men (Belknap, 1991; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997; Zimmer, 1986; Zimmer, 1989).

Sexual Harassment

Women CWs have also reported instances of sexual harassment on the job. Acts such as brushing up against women officers as well as touching and pinching of breasts and buttocks were reported. Other examples of sexual harassment include whistling, “cat calls,” propositions for sex, and comments about one’s body (Belknap, 1991). Some women in the interview study by Pogrebin and Poole (1997) felt that the acts of sexual harassment on the behalf of male officers were so deliberate that they were concerned that their men counterparts legitimately felt they were entitled to sexual favors from women staff members. Women reported that being subjected to sexual harassment made them feel that they may have inadvertently encouraged such behavior and they experienced doubt about themselves and how they behaved. Some of the sexual harassment experienced by women CWs was at the hand of supervisors. Being subjected to unwanted sexual advances on behalf of a supervisor can place a woman officer who is in an insubordinate position in a significantly compromising situation. Women CWs reported being reluctant to report sexual harassment from co-workers feeling that they may not be believed or that they might be punished for bringing up the issue (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997).

In her interviews of women CWs, Belknap (1991) found that there were more reported of instances of gender harassment than sexual harassment. Although there was considerable evidence of sexual harassment reported, many of the women in the study tended to minimize instances of sexual harassment. Belknap addressed the challenging situation facing women in corrections, as they appear to be punished with sexual and gender harassment both for superior and inferior job performance. The culture of corrections work assumes that being subjected to harassment is a natural and inevitable sacrifice of working in the corrections field. Harassment becomes normalized and is therefore accepted by both men and women in corrections (Cadwaladr, 1993). Cadwaladr (1993) proposed that one possible reason women might not report harassment in corrections is that there is a strong prison subculture. Officers feel pressure to be loyal to other officers. There is an unspoken code against informing on one’s peer group. Women may fear being labeled “a rat” if they complain about harassment from co-workers (Cadwaladr, 1993).

Stress and Mental Health Issues of Women Corrections Workers

Women CWs have reported emotional problems resulting from on the job sexual harassment from men co-workers. Some women reported feeling angry, irritable, and hopeless as

a result of the harassment they experienced (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). Additionally, the pressure to perform on the job and the subsequent stress of feeling isolated, can affect job performance negatively. The emotional problems resulting from workplace harassment and stress by women CWs can also extend beyond the work place. Women CWs reported problems sleeping, and that the stress of harassment at work caused their home life to suffer (Jurik, 1988).

In the past, women CWs received little organizational support in dealing with job stresses and integration into men's institutions. Women officers were discouraged from forming support networks for fears of lawsuits and labor organizing efforts. Especially when few women were employed in corrections, a lack of support networks meant that women were left to face isolation and work related stress on their own. Additionally, the burden of adapting to a male dominated environment was left primarily to each individual woman (Jurik, 1988).

Van Voorhis and colleagues (1991) found in their survey that women and racial minorities reported greater levels of fear, stress, and job dissatisfaction in their roles as corrections officers. It was found that these experiences could be alleviated to a certain extent by organizational support such as supportive supervisors and co-workers. This finding demonstrated the need for a supportive environment in reducing the stress experienced by staff members. Alleviating these stresses through a supportive environment could aid in operational issues such as staff retention and reducing compensation claims (Van Voorhis et al., 1991).

The differences in reported stress experienced by men and women CWs was not found consistently in the literature. Some studies, such as Griffin (2006), have not found significant differences in the level of job stress experienced by men and women correctional officers. In her survey of women and men corrections officers in men's prisons, Griffin found the level of stress for men and women appeared to be affected by similar factors in their work and home life. In Griffin's study the stress levels of both men and women corrections officers were influenced by the amount of co-worker support, organizational support, work-family conflicts, and work safety concerns. The results of Griffin's study should be interpreted with caution, as the sample of survey participants was over 75% men, thus women were not strongly represented by the sample. It should also be noted that men are not subjected to the additional stresses experienced by women from workplace harassment and the difficulties of adjusting to an environment that by design has been unaccommodating and opposed to their presence. Lambert and colleagues (2007) also proposed that women corrections officers may be more likely to seek social support

in dealing with job stress, which could aid in their ability to cope with job related stresses. Cadwaladr (1993) found that women corrections officers in her study tended to withdraw from the workplace in one way or another in response to stress and harassment. Women commonly avoided superfluous contact with fellow co-workers, went on stress leave, became apathetic about the job, or resigned.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I outline the methodology I used for this study. I conducted this study from a qualitative research stance using narrative inquiry. I begin with a general discussion of qualitative methodology and narrative inquiry. In introducing narrative inquiry, I discuss aspects of this approach that made it an appropriate methodology for investigating the experiences of women CWs, including narrative meaning and the human experience, narrative identity, and using narrative to understand the women in this study as belonging to a unique cultural group. I also discuss myself as a researcher and what beliefs and experiences I brought to this study. Information about participant criteria, ethical considerations, and how I collected and analyzed the data produced in the study are also discussed.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research is a paradigm of research that can be used to investigate the every-day lives and social settings of individuals (Van Den Hoonaard, 2012). Qualitative research focuses on the qualities, processes, and meanings that are not, or cannot be, measured in terms of quantity or amount. It is unique as a form of research in that it is an activity that “locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). In this way qualitative research makes the world observable by creating representations that can be used to understand the world, such as interviews, field-notes, and conversations. In qualitative research there is an assumption that an objective reality can never be fully encapsulated, and our knowing of a phenomenon can only be attained through its representations. The different representations of a phenomenon collected by the researcher can be connected to represent the phenomenon as a whole. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011):

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning. (p. 8)

Polkinghorne (1988) had a similar view about how to best study the meaning of individual experience. He stated that while the material realm can be studied by quantitative methods, the realm of meaning is better investigated through qualitative expressions of language.

In his view, the goal of research into meaning is the production of precise and clear descriptions of various forms of meaning. This does not provide outcomes on which we can predict and control behavior, but instead can increase our power and control over our actions. Qualitative research is both interpretive and naturalistic, allowing researchers to study phenomena in its naturally occurring setting in an attempt to understand and make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to those phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Epistemological and Ontological Positions

I came to this study with experiences and assumptions of my own from working as a woman in a men's correctional facility. My thoughts and experiences as a researcher could not be ignored and needed to be taken into consideration, as they would affect the data that was generated and how it was analyzed. Not only did my background as a woman CW affect the data, but as the researcher and a participant in this study my experiences were interwoven with those of the women I work with. The fact that I was not an outside observer of this research area meant that this study was approached from a specific epistemological and ontological position.

I approached this study from the social constructivism paradigm. A paradigm represents the "worldview" that defines the nature of the world, and each paradigm includes basic beliefs and assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The social constructivism paradigm follows the ontological assumption that reality is constructed through human social activity. Reality therefore does not exist prior to being socially invented (Kim, 2001). The social constructivism paradigm allowed for the investigation of how meaning and understanding develops from an individual's social interactions (McKinley, 2015). In this way my participants and I would construct the reality of being a woman CW together. It is likely that our understanding of the experiences and reality of being a woman CW will increase by gaining the perspective of those who are living that experience.

The epistemological assumption of the social constructivism paradigm posited that knowledge is the product of social interaction, which is influenced by cultural and historical factors. Knowledge is viewed as a shared creation and cannot be attained through individual experience alone in isolation. Meaning is created through social interactions with one another and by interacting with the environment one lives in (Prawat & Floden, 1994). This means that knowledge and meaning was created through the interaction I had with my fellow women CWs but also that the knowledge we created together was influenced by working as CWs in a men's

correctional facility. These findings and knowledge were constructed throughout the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These assumptions implied that my understanding of the research findings would be affected by my own reality and experiences and that the two could not be separated. The fact that I am also a woman CW and had my own experiences in fulfilling that role affected the information the participants shared with me and the findings we created together. The findings of this study, and the data created by myself and my participants were shaped by my experiences.

Human Experience and Narrative Inquiry

Polkinghorne (1988) described the most basic definition of narrative as referring to any spoken or written presentation. He stated that the term narrative can be used to describe the process of creating a story, the cognitive representation of a story, or the result of the story making process such as stories, tales, or histories. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), people have been using narrative since ancient times to describe their experiences and endeavors. Narratives are among the first modes of learning that we encounter in our lives. Webster and Mertova stated:

Narrative records human experience through the construction and reconstruction of personal stories; it is well suited to addressing issues of complexity and cultural and human centredness because of its capacity to record and retell those events that have been of most influence on us. (p. 1)

Throughout life, stories impact and differentiate our interactions with information, society, and other individuals. Narrative is how people are able to make sense of their lives.

According to Elliot (2005), there are several themes that are typically present in research projects that are drawn to the narrative inquiry methodology. First, narrative researchers have a curiosity about the lived experience of individuals and they have an awareness of the temporal quality of that experience. Second, researchers who are drawn to narrative inquiry have desire to empower research participants by using a method which allows the participants to communicate what they feel are the most pertinent themes of the investigated phenomena. Third, there is typically an interest in the change and process of the phenomena over time. Fourth, researchers using narrative inquiry have an interest in “the self” and “representations of the self” (p. 6). Finally, there is an understanding and awareness that the researcher is seen as a co-narrator in the construction of narrative.

In order to understand why narrative inquiry was an appropriate methodology for examining the experiences of women CWs, it was necessary to examine the relation of narrative to human experience and the meanings people attribute to their experiences. A definition of narrative provided by Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) proposed that:

Narratives (stories) in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and this offers insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it. (p. 16)

Within this definition there are three key components of narrative that are proposed. First, narratives are said to be chronological in that they represent a chain of events. Second, narratives are meaningful to the narrator. Third, narratives have a social construction in that they are produced with a specific audience in mind. These elements of narrative cannot be separated, in that the meaningfulness of the narrative is partially derived both from its temporal order and in the social circumstances of its construction (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) proposed similar components that are present in human narratives. They viewed narrative inquiry as “a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (p. 20). They proposed a three-dimensional model for narrative, which included the dimensions of temporality, social, and place as central parts of narratives. Temporality referred to the events and people under study as being viewed in light of having a past, present, and future. Social referred to the personal and social interactions in which individual's experiences take place - such as cultural influences. Place referred to the need to acknowledge a connection between our experiences and the settings in which they take place.

Narrative Meaning

Polkinghorne (1988) stated that narrative is “the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful” (p. 1). He proposed that:

Narrative meaning functions to give form to the understanding of a purpose to life and to join everyday actions and events into episodic units. It provides a framework for understanding the past events of one's life and for planning future actions. (p. 11)

Polkinghorne (1988) viewed narrative meaning as a cognitive process in which individuals can arrange their experiences into meaningful episodes. While one cannot directly observe narrative meaning, as it is a cognitive process, the stories that are developed during the

construction of human narratives are a representation of narrative meaning that can be observed. In this way, Polkinghorne viewed narrative meaning as an activity, not a thing or substance, in which narratives are composed as a sequence of events and parts that help to define the activity as a whole. Descriptive narrative as described by Polkinghorne (1988), aims to “render accounts already in place which are used by individuals or groups as their means for ordering and making temporal events meaningful” (p. 161). It should be noted that descriptive narrative differs from explanatory narrative, which is also described by Polkinghorne. In an explanatory narrative there is an attempt to link events in a cause and effect respect. Descriptive narrative was a more appropriate approach for this research study as I did not know what would be discovered in the data and therefore a cause and effect aspect may not be apparent. Clandinin and Connolly (2000) also saw temporality as an essential component of narrative. Time was seen as a key element of human existence; the actions of people rely on an awareness of time and change. Narratives are structured with an awareness of the concept of time. They are a form of communication in which the narrator can externalize their feelings about experiences and emphasize which elements of their experiences hold the most significance for them and the intended audience (Elliot, 2005; Riessman, 1993).

Narrative and Identity

Narrative inquiry appeared to be a suitable method for investigating how the identities of the women in my study and my own identity have been affected by our role as a CW. Elliot (2005) stated that narrative methodology corresponds to individual identity in that it is a practical method to understand oneself “as living through time, a human subject with a past, present, and future, made whole by the coherence of the narrative plot with a beginning, middle, and end” (p. 125).

Narrative inquiry can be used not only to understand individual experiences and the meanings made from these experiences, but also to communicate information about the cultural framework from which individuals make meaning of their lives. This means that the close analysis of several individuals may offer evidence that is believed to provide knowledge about the inter-subjective meanings shared by the whole of an investigated group (Elliot, 2005). In this way, narrative inquiry allowed me to both examine the individual experiences of women working in a men’s correctional facility and also commonalities and differences in the experiences of this group as a cultural community. Institutional settings, such as the correctional

facility where the participants in this study work, have an influence on the narratives the individuals in these settings create. These settings provide a resource for the composition of narratives but can also be a source of restriction on what should be shared. For example, Gubrium and Holstein (1998) claimed:

Schools, clinics, counseling centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, support groups and self-help organizations, among many other sites for storying existence, provide narrative frameworks for conveying personal experience through time, for what is taken to be relevant in our lives, and why the lives under consideration developed in the way that they did. (p. 164)

Narrative inquiry provided an opportunity to investigate the influence that working in a men's correctional facility had on the narratives the women created. According to Kelly and Dickinson (1997), how our narratives are told depends largely on our cultural resources. Though personal narratives are original and creative they are composed from templates of narratives that have been learned and internalized by the individual.

The Role of the Researcher in Narrative Construction

Polkinghorne (1988), Elliot (2005), and Riessman (2008) emphasized the role of the researcher in the creation of narrative meaning. The reader of the narrative creates meaning by interacting with the written text of the narrator. Interpretation of narrative does not necessarily involve the discovery of meaning in the text, but rather meaning is created through the experience of co-creating the narrative with the research participant. Interpretations of a narrative may differ with each reader, as each reader brings their own unique set of experiences and beliefs to the interpretation. According to Salmon and Riessman (2008):

All narratives are, in a fundamental sense, co-constructed. The audience whether physically present or not, exerts a crucial influence on what can and cannot be said, how things should be expressed, what can be taken for granted, what needs explaining, and so on. We now recognize that the personal account, in research interviews, which has traditionally been seen as the expression of a single subjectivity, is in fact always a co-construction. (p. 80)

Researcher's Subjectivity

As a woman CW employed at a men's correctional facility I did not come to this research question by chance. I recognized that there were unique aspects to working as a woman CW. I

came to this study with my own set of experiences and beliefs about working in a men's correctional facility. While some research methodologies may want the researcher to let go of prior beliefs and experiences in order to investigate a phenomenon, narrative inquiry allowed me an opportunity to place myself in the research. I believed it would have been impossible for me to fully remove myself from the research process. According to Bold (2012), although the narrative approach does not fit with the standard view of objectivity in research, it is necessary to acknowledge one's subjective stance in data collection and analysis. I have been able to reflect on my own experiences as a woman CW but this may not reflect the experiences of other women working in the same position. As I have experienced it, a men's correctional center can be a challenging environment to work in. I have faced challenges in working with male inmates who may not feel that women should be in positions of authority over them. I have also faced challenging behavior and acting out from inmates in an effort to diminish my authority over them. These experiences and biases likely impacted all aspects of this study, including establishing a research relationship with my co-workers, the generation of data with my participants, and how I analyzed the data and represented it. In having an awareness of my personal biases, I strived to be diligent in representing the stories of my fellow participants in their voices.

Participant Recruitment and Criteria

The participants in this study were women CWs employed at a men's correctional facility, including myself. As part of the recruitment criteria, the study was only open to women who were working in the *Corrections Worker 1* role in a full-time or part-time capacity. The Corrections Worker 1 role is a position where the individual is required to interact with and supervise offenders for the duration of their shift. I believed that other roles women may fill in the correctional environment such as administrative, nursing, or staff supervisor are qualitatively different from that of a CW and therefore were excluded from this study. The method of sampling I used was the purposeful sampling method. Purposeful sampling involves the selection of participants because of some shared characteristic (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). For this study, the participants were chosen because they are women CWs and they have in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon I wished to study. In completing this study, I sent out a recruitment email to all women CWs informing them about the study (see Appendix A for invitation to participate email poster). To do this I accessed an available list of all the correctional center staff and contacted the

women CWs via their Government of Saskatchewan email address on the staff email server. Permission to use the Government of Saskatchewan email server was explicitly sought as part of the ethical approval for this study. The recruitment email informed the prospective participants about the study including the purpose of the study, the participation requirements, and contact information for the researcher. I then invited those women CWs who were interested in partaking in the study to contact me via my personal email. From the pool of interested participants I invited five women CWs to take part in the study. Participants were invited to participate in the study on a first-come-first-serve basis until I reached the desired number of participants. I chose to include a smaller number of participants in this study as this allowed me to gain the in-depth data that is desired when completing narrative inquiry research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Ethical Considerations

In this section I outline the ethical considerations that I felt were pertinent to completing this study. I discuss the ethical considerations that are present in most research projects generally and also ethical considerations that are specific to conducting a study using narrative inquiry. Ethical approval from both the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board and the Government of Saskatchewan was granted prior to commencement of this study.

Dual-Roles

Researchers using narrative inquiry are faced with unique ethical considerations that are related to the nature of conducting narrative analysis. According to Josselson (2007), narrative inquiry involves investigating people's lived experience, but unlike other methods of investigation it is intrinsically based on the relationship between the researcher and participants. Essentially all research projects have ethical considerations regarding free consent, confidentiality, and protecting participants from harm. What can make narrative research more complicated ethically is the fact that the narrative researcher is in a dual-role (Bold, 2012; Josselson, 2007). The researcher maintains an intimate relationship with her participants while also maintaining professional responsibility within the scholarly community. Every facet of narrative research needs to be considered in light of the ethical responsibilities of a research relationship. As Josselson succinctly stated, "Interpersonal ethics demand responsibility to the dignity, privacy, and well-being of those who are studied, and these often conflict with the scholarly obligation of accuracy, authenticity, and interpretation" (p. 538). Narrative research involves respectfully intruding into people's lives and requesting they help us learn about a

phenomenon. For me, there was a third relational component to this study as I am also a co-worker of my fellow participants in this study. I felt this was likely a benefit to me in terms of establishing the rapport needed to complete narrative research, but I was also aware of this extra relational aspect in terms of maintaining my professional and scholarly responsibilities. I was not in a supervisory role to any of the participants, which helped to eliminate the possibility of participation in the study because of a power differential.

Contract Between the Researcher and Participant

According to Josselson (2007), consent for conducting narrative research can be thought of as an explicit and implicit contract between the researcher and participants. Explicit components of the contract include information such as an introduction to the researcher and study, as well as voluntary participation and the recording of data. The explicit components of the contract are generally straightforward. The implicit component of the contract is harder to define as it refers to the intimate relationship between the researcher and participant of which the conditions, assumptions, and expectations can be difficult to foresee in advance of completing research as narrative meaning is constructed together. Josselson stated, “I don’t think we can fully inform a participant at the outset about what he or she is in fact consenting to since much of what will take place is unforeseeable” (p. 540). Josselson proposed that having awareness of, and recognizing the intrinsic dilemmas that face the narrative researcher may be the only solution to this problem.

Informed Consent

Issues pertaining to informed consent for this study involved seeking the participant’s voluntary consent to participate in the study. Josselson (2007) stated that when informing participants about the purpose of the study the researcher should be as transparent about their interests and focus as possible. This is important in establishing a connection with the participant, as good narrative research relies on this relationship. Participants were required to read and sign a consent form prior to participation in the study (see Appendix B for the consent form). The consent form described information that participants needed to be aware of in making an informed decision about participating in the study. The consent form included the purpose and procedure of the study, potential risks and benefits of participation, offered compensation for participation, issues of confidentiality and storage of study data, the right to withdraw from the study, how to receive study results, and contact information for the researcher and supervisor in

case of questions or concerns about the study. In this study, I wished to audio record the interviews conducted with participants which was explicitly discussed as part of the informed consent process. The approximate amount of time needed to conduct interviews with the participants was stated on the consent form so participants were aware of the time commitment to take part in the study. Participant interviews took place outside of work hours, requiring a personal time commitment, which was also stated on the consent form. The requirement to participate in daily diary entries for a one-week period and up to two interviews with the researcher also appeared on the consent form. The participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so. Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcript of their interview data and to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript if they wished. Participants were required to sign a transcript release form indicating that they had the opportunity to review their transcripts and that they were being released to the researcher to be used in her thesis document (see Appendix C for the transcript release form).

Complete anonymity could not be assured in this study as the participants were known to the researcher, but necessary steps to ensure participant confidentiality and privacy were taken. Josselson (2007) stated that assurance of confidentiality and privacy is central to narrative research. Unless participants trust that we can ensure their anonymity, they would not share with us what they do. In order to ensure confidentiality in this study, I referred each participant in my sources of data and in any written results by a participant number. Signed consent forms were stored separately from completed study data, to ensure that a participant could not be associated with any specific set of responses. Care was taken not to include details that could allow others to identify the participants within my final thesis document. Though care was taken to protect the identity of the study participants, there was a chance that individuals familiar with an individual participant would be able to identify the participant due to the context and size of the participant pool. Additionally, participants were informed that as per Government of Saskatchewan – Ministry of Justice, Corrections, and Policing policy, if instances of sexual misconduct by named or unnamed individuals, information pertaining to criminal activity, information jeopardizing the safety of any individual in the center or security of the center, or information regarding the safety of children were reported in either interview or diary data I was obligated to report it to Ministry personnel. In order to ensure the confidentiality of any third-party individuals, participants were

asked explicitly in the consent form not to use names or personally identifying information of any staff or offenders during their interview or diary entries. Names or personally identifying information said inadvertently during the interview were edited out of the transcript data. After making transcripts of the interview data digital audio files were deleted. Computerized documents were kept on a password-protected computer and within an encrypted document. Diary data was stored within a locked filing cabinet. The data was kept securely in my care during the duration of the study and then in the care of my supervisor for a minimum of five years after completion of the study. When data files and documents are no longer needed they will be destroyed via file deletion and shredding. Participants were offered the opportunity to contact myself at the duration of the study if they were interested in receiving a summary of the results of the study. Participants were also informed via the consent form that the Ministry of Justice, Corrections, and Policing may require a copy of the final document or a summary of the study results.

Benefit and Risk of Participation

It was believed that this study would pose a minimal risk to participants, meaning that the risk of the study would be no greater than the risks encountered in their daily lives. There have been instances where studies have warned about the possibility of participants becoming emotionally upset when discussing their experiences, but Josselson (2007) has stated that interviewees have control over what they share during interviews and while reflecting on painful experiences could be distressing, it can also serve to aid in integration and personal growth. In order to manage the possible risk of emotional harm the researcher explicitly stated via the consent form that participants had the right to disclose only what they were comfortable sharing. The researcher was diligent in watching for signs of emotional distress and did offer the participant a break in the interview process if needed. The researcher also reminded the participants that as an employee of the Government of Saskatchewan they have access to the Employee Assistance Program which can provide assistance to the participant should they feel they need help in coping with experiences which might have affected them in a negative manner. As the experiences of women CWs' is typically underrepresented in the qualitative literature, I had hoped to give a voice to these experiences. A possible benefit of partaking in this study was an opportunity to share one's story, which could offer a feeling of empowerment for the participants.

Data Collection

Participant interviews have been established as an appropriate method for eliciting the narratives of research participants. Narrative researchers Mishler (1986) and Riessman (1993) have discussed the interview method as being conducive to the spontaneous creation of narratives by individuals being interviewed about their experiences. Individuals typically enjoy telling their stories and will deliver narrative descriptions of their experiences in research interviews unless the structure of the interview or the types of questions asked by the researcher stifle such stories. Specifically, I completed semi-structured interviews with the study participants in order to gain in-depth descriptions of the experiences of the participants. In semi-structured interviews the researcher asks questions from the interview schedule and can then use the interviewee's answers to come up with follow-up questions or further discussion on specific areas (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Semi-structured interviews allowed me to document the experiences of the participants by asking the participants pre-determined questions that allowed me to focus the interview but also let the participant describe what they felt was most important to understanding their experience. Though a semi-structured interview guide was used, the interviews that took place could also be considered conversational interviews. Conversational interviews are considered more of a collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee in that the interview involves a conversation about the topic in question until the two parties are confident in their understanding of the other individual and what needs to be understood about the topic of discussion (Conrad & Schober, 1999; Suchman & Jordan, 1990). In narrative interviewing, the aim is to generate accounts that are detailed rather than brief, general answers (Riessman, 2008). Mishler specifically emphasized structuring the interview as to empower participants by encouraging them find their own "voices." When power is shifted to interview respondents they are more likely to convey "stories." Holloway and Jefferson (2000) stated that the best type of interview questions to elicit narrative responses are those questions that talk about particular times and situations in the participant's life, rather than questions that focus on the participant's life over a long period of time. Eliciting narrative responses from participants also involves being a good listener and allowing participants to tell their story (Elliot, 2005).

I conducted one interview with each participant. Interviews lasted on average 2.5 hours per participant. The shortest interview was 2 hours 24 minutes and the longest interview was 3 hours 34 minutes. Interview discussion focused on the participant's experiences of being a

woman in the CW role including challenges, rewards, gender issues, and self-identity. During the interview, I asked the questions that I had prepared and any subsequent follow-up questions based on the participants' responses (see Appendix D for the interview guide). I digitally recorded the participant responses using a recording program on an iPhone and iPod after having received consent for digitally recording participants. From the recordings I had a professional transcriptionist transcribe the interviews for analysis. Participants were asked for their permission for me to use of an outside transcriber via the consent form. Additionally, the transcriber was required to sign an oath of confidentiality promising to keep the study data secure and private (see Appendix E for the transcriber declaration of confidentiality). Though I had indicated on the consent form that the participants could possibly be asked for a second interview I did not feel second interviews were needed. The interviews contained large amounts of data and on reading through the transcripts there were no apparent areas that required additional information from the participants. As I wished to incorporate my own experiences of being a woman CW employed in a men's correctional facility into my study, I also became a study participant. To do this I answered the same interview questions that I had asked my participants which I then analyzed along with the data of my fellow participants.

In addition to conducting interviews with the participants, I also asked participants to keep a diary detailing their experiences on shift for a one-week period. Diaries can be used by researchers to supplement interview data, as they provide valuable information about participant's experiences and behaviors on a daily basis (Corti, 1993). According to Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli (2003), the diary method is useful for examining on-going experiences while also recognizing the importance of the context in which one's experience takes place. Elliot (1997) stated that the use of participant diaries when combined with in-depth participant interviews is a means to "observe" behavior which is otherwise unobservable. Diary entries allow participants to actively record and reflect on their own experience as part of the research process. The use of a diary-interview method offers several advantages to the researcher. Diary-interview studies allow for the use of different response modes for participants to share their experiences. As diary entries can be recorded without the involvement of the researcher, they are also useful for capturing the diarists' own priorities and what aspects of their experience they feel should be heard (Elliot, 1997). I used the method described by Bolger and colleagues, where participants recorded diary entries of their experiences at fixed times, for the purpose of this

study this occurred following the participant's shift for a one-week period. The work rotation of the participants in this study consisted of seven consecutive workdays, meaning that a workweek required seven diary entries. Participants were provided with a diary booklet following their interview and I explained the process of filling out the diary to each participant. According to Corti (1993), research diaries may be open format, in which the participant records experiences and events in their own words, or they can be structured, where diary entries are pre-categorized. Corti stated that an advantage of using an open, unstructured, format is that there is more opportunity to recode and analyze the diary data. The participant diary entries were unstructured, although as Corti (1993) and Elliot (1997) suggested, the first page of the diary notebook provided guidance as to what the participants might consider writing about and guidelines for completing the diary entries (see Appendix F for the diary instructions). An open format to the diary entries allowed participants to write about aspects of their experiences as women CWs that were important to them and to structure the diary entries as they wished. Diary entries involved a reflection of the days shift including the participant's thoughts, feelings, experienced challenges, and overall experience as a woman in this line of work. Participant diary entries were asked to be approximately one-page long for each day. Participants were asked to leave any names or personally identifying information relevant to themselves, other staff, or offenders out of their diary entries in order to ensure participant and third-party confidentiality.

I had originally felt that it would be interesting to examine both the written diary and oral narrative produced during the interview for each participant. However, due to issues around collecting diary data this was not possible. For two of the participants in the study, the diary booklets became lost in the mailing process. Due to researcher instructions not to put identifying information on the envelope, there was no way for documents to be returned to sender if there was an issue with the postage or delivery process. One participant chose to discontinue writing after her second diary entry. Additionally, due to relocating and taking a leave from the correctional center I was also unable to complete my own diary entry as planned. Due to these issues I was left with two completed diary booklets and one partial diary booklet to analyze as part of the study data. During analysis the diary data did not differ greatly from the interview data and did not reveal any new or different aspects to being a woman CW. This data saturation happens when the possibility for further coding of data is no longer achievable (Fusch & Ness, 2015). For this reason and because I was missing booklets for several of the participants,

including myself, it was decided I would use the diaries in the manner that was described by Corti (1993), in that the diaries would be used as a secondary data source to supplement the participant interviews. There were no anticipated ethical implications over having study data lost in the mailing process as participants were given instructions both verbally and in writing not to use identifying information about themselves or any third party individuals in writing their diary entries. According to Canada Post personnel (personal communication, May 16, 2016), mail items that are deemed undeliverable and do not contain a return address would be forwarded to a Canada Post facility and destroyed after a two week time frame.

Data Analysis

Riessman (1993) recommended that the transcription and analysis of data not be separated, as the organization of the transcript provides support for the meaning of the interview. However, due to time constraints an outside transcriber was hired to transcribe the data. To make up for this “lost time” with the data, I was sure to read the transcript of each participant several times, including while listening to the recordings to ensure accuracy. The method of data analysis used was thematic narrative analysis. In thematic narrative analysis, the content of the narrative is the sole focus of analysis (Riessman, 2008). According to Polkinghorne (1988), “The theme or point of the story is not usually directly presented in the text, for it requires inference and interpretation on the researcher’s part” (p. 169). Descriptive research allows researchers to present the “narrative schemes” that are intended by the storyteller. Polkinghorne stated, “Data collection results in a collection of stories. The goal of analysis is to uncover the common themes or plots in the data. Analysis is carried out using hermeneutic techniques for noting underlying patterns across examples of stories” (p. 177). Josselson (2011) stated that there are two aims in narrative analysis. The first aim is to uncover the themes that unify a story and the voices that disrupt the main themes. Second, there is an effort to understand the themes in relation to the narrative as a whole. In order to analyze my participants’ narratives and my own thematically, I followed the guidelines described by Riessman (2008). She suggested:

The investigator works with a single interview at a time, isolating and ordering relevant episodes into a chronological biographical account. After the process has been completed for all interviews, the researcher zooms in, identifying the underlying assumptions in each account and naming (coding) them. Particular cases are then selected to illustrate

general patterns - range and variation - and underlying assumptions of different cases are compared. (p. 57)

Thematic narrative analysis allowed me to uncover the themes that were communicated by my participants and myself regarding our experiences of being women working in a men's correctional facility. It also allowed me to explore commonalities and differences among our individual experiences.

Data Representation

According to Hunter (2010), the aim of data representation in narrative analysis is to represent the participants' data in a way that is both coherent and meaningful. In narrative analysis data is analyzed within the social, historical, and cultural context in which it was created. When embarking on the task of composing research texts, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested reading other researchers and writers that one finds particularly thoughtful. In order to decide how to best represent both my participant's and my own story of being a woman CW I read the research of others and how they represented their own narratives and those of their participants. According to Clandinin and Connelly, reading the works of others can help "open up our minds to new possibilities and help us address wonders about fictionalizing, representing multiple voices, and interweaving various genres, such as journal entries, transcribed talk, and photographs" (p. 137). Reading the works of other writers is a way to open ourselves up to narrative ways of thinking and to see the possible alternative methods of inquiry to the traditional formalistic and reductionistic inquiries which have dominated research. Clandinin and Connelly also stated that when beginning to write a research text one must consider the tension between voice, signature, and audience. This means balancing the audience the narrative is written for - our participants and those outside the inquiry - as well as how intimately we reveal our participants and ourselves to the reader. Narrative form must also balance the personal and social tensions of the inquiry. Personal tensions are the experiences of the participants and the inquirer and social tensions are the ongoing conversation about the issues addressed in the inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

When reading the works of other narrative researchers I came across two methods that appealed to me as a means of representing the experiences of my participants and myself as a woman CW employed in a men's correctional facility. The first method, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Hunter (2010), illustrated narrative studies in which

participant data was represented as a series of separate narratives. Each participant's story was summarized and represented as a separate section in the write-up. Hunter then suggested using the participant's own language to describe each theme and to highlight the emergent themes and participants' stories with "quotable quotes" (p. 49) from the transcribed data. The second method, used by Gosse, Parr, and Allison (2008) and Bain (2011), involved creating a composite character from the participant data, which embodied the overall impressions of the participants, and the main themes related to their experiences, which were communicated in the data. Bain then included a separate chapter detailing the themes and sub-themes that emerged during thematic analysis of the data along with example excerpts taken from participant data.

The method of data representation that I used was the composite method described by Gosse et al. (2008) and Bain (2011). After reading several examples of narrative studies, the study by Bain in particular resonated with me. She used herself as a participant in her study and created a composite character that represented the experiences of both herself and her study participants of growing up as the child of a parent suffering from alcoholism. As a woman CW, I too wanted a way in which to incorporate my experiences of working in a men's correctional center into my study. Creating a composite character was a way to share my participant's and my experiences in an effective and ethical manner, as the creation of composite stories is a way to help ensure that individual participants cannot be identified (Creswell, 2012).

CHAPTER FOUR:

NARRATIVE REPRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this section I use the narrative inquiry methodology to communicate the results of this study. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative researchers need to be prepared to offer an explanation of what the researcher is able to learn about the phenomenon that makes it special and unique and could not be discovered through other methods or theories. In listening to the stories of my fellow women CWs it was confirmed for me that narrative inquiry was the best method of capturing both their experiences and the meaning of those experiences. I shared in moments of laughter and moments of tears during my interactions with my participants. In sharing the experiences of my co-workers I felt moments of understanding and admiration. The strength and personal resilience these women possessed was truly inspiring. The thoughts and feelings of these women deserved to be heard in the descriptive depth that narrative inquiry can provide, as it enables me to illuminate their experiences for the reader (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

According to Polkinghorne (1988), the realm of meaning behind human experience is ever evolving. Recollecting and recounting their experiences would have created new or evolved meanings through the research process. The depiction of results follows the story of Andrea as she journeys towards becoming a woman CW and throughout her career. I chose the name Andrea as the name means courage and bravery (Bolton, 2013). The women in my study embody these characteristics, both in their decision to enter into the corrections field, and in their decision to have remained dedicated to working in corrections despite facing great challenges and adversity. Andrea's story takes place in two forms: a written narrative summary of Andrea's life, and Andrea's diary entries. I chose this two-format approach in order to depict changes in Andrea as a person and in her experiences over her whole career – from beginning to retirement. I felt this method would allow me to successfully connect pieces of the narrative that would otherwise be fragmented in covering a 30-year career. It was important to depict the longitudinal manner of Andrea's career as several of the participants had worked in corrections for a similar duration (since the 1980s and 1990s). A story depicting Andrea's whole career was a way to combine the career experiences of those women who had worked in corrections for a longer duration and those women who had worked in corrections for a shorter duration such as myself. Completing diary entries also allowed me to better integrate the experiences of six different

women into one composite character. I also felt that the idea of having the character Andrea as keeping a diary would fit well with the diary that the participant's in the study were asked to keep about their experiences as women CWs.

Andrea's Story

Childhood and Early Life Experiences

In order to understand how I became the woman I am today, you should hear where I came from. I was born and raised in the typical "small town Saskatchewan" environment. I guess it is a stretch to even say small town as it only consisted of a few streets and the main drag with the single flashing stop light. We did not exactly live in town either. We lived on a farm approximately 20kms outside the town. My siblings and I, along with most of the other kids from the area, were bussed into town to attend school. In my family there were five of us, my mom, dad, and the three of us kids. Me, I'm the oldest. Next came my sister and finally dad's long delayed wish of a son.

My dad was a burly mountain of a man. When I was younger I used to look up at him and think no one was stronger and that he could do anything. I idolized him and wanted to be exactly like him. I guess you could say I was "daddy's girl." My dad had a work ethic that most people could not compete with today. Up before the sun and to bed well after. My dad farmed during the spring until fall and in the winter months he drove long haul trucks. His work took a lot of his time and he was away a lot, either in the field or away driving truck. When he was home there was nothing better. He would throw us into the air and we would scream and giggle. Now, my dad was not all fun and games. With his good work ethic he was not going to be raising a bunch of lazy kids! On weekends there was no sleeping in and Saturday morning cartoons (well sometimes). We were expected to help out where we could. Gardening, taking care of the lawn, helping shovel grain, helping dad work on the truck were all areas we would help, or at least try not to hinder, dad in his work. Being the oldest I had the most of the responsibility in chipping in and working alongside dad. As my brother was five years younger than me, I guess I was the closest thing he had to a son who he could mentor in taking over the family farm one day. I guess that may be why I looked like a little boy until I was almost 14. I was always covered in dirt and wearing baggy jeans and a t-shirt like it was my uniform.

Mom used to call me her "little tomboy." To say I was different from my mom would be a total understatement. My mom was beautiful and petite. Hair, make-up, and nails were always

done. She had grown up being a city girl until her dad had been transferred in his job and moved to the small branch of our town bank. That's where she had met my dad. She did not have a taste for the hard labor and farm life like my dad or even myself. Mom worked in town as a secretary at the only office building in town: the town municipal office. Mom would try to involve me in some of the things she enjoyed as a girl such as playing with dolls and baking with her mom. Looking back I think she was trying to make somewhat of a lady out of me. It didn't work too well though, as I wasn't very interested in those types of things. When I had free time I wanted to be outside running around, playing ball, or catching the wild kittens on the farm. I think she always hoped I would come around and be a little more "her daughter."

As I grew up I became involved in a lot of sports activities. I had a real competitive streak and liked to prove to everyone, including myself, that I could be the best at whatever I tried. Being a tomboy came in handy through out high school as I played hockey with the boys and fit right in. I was even able to show up a few of the guys on the ice, showing a girl could be just as good as a boy!

Life changed for me my senior year of high school. Mom and dad sat me down to have a serious discussion about my future. At that point I was still up in the air about what my future plans were and did not see the point of rushing into anything. I had always intended on sticking around and helping dad on the farm, at least for a while. "Andrea," dad said. "Things with farming are becoming harder and harder." "Look at me, my body is falling apart before its time and it's a lot of hard work for sometimes very little payoff." Financially, farming was not all it had used to be. The bills were becoming more difficult to pay with the rising costs and lower pay offs. "We, your mom and I, want more for you than a life of physical labor. We want you to go to school and get an education." I didn't know what to think about this at first. I had no real plans to go to school or for what I might do with an education. My mom had gone to secretary school but my dad, being a farm boy, had not even finished high school. If I went I would be the first person in my family to have attended post secondary school. I had a huge decision to make and did not feel prepared to make it. Mom was hopeful I would pick something that would be beneficial for a young woman to make a career out of such as a nurse or a schoolteacher. Dad was more open and just wanted it to be something that would make me happy. No matter what I decided I knew my parents would be proud of me. My parents, especially my dad, always told

me I could do anything I wanted to in life. I had certainly proved that so far, having always succeeded in whatever I tried.

Young Womanhood and Leaving the Farm

In the fall of 1975 I started my new goal of getting an education that could provide me with a means of getting a good job so I could support myself. This meant I would be leaving the farm and moving to the big city. I had only been to the city a few times in my whole life and now I was going to be living there! I was filled with apprehension and nervousness. This was so far out of my comfort zone. At first I was unsure about what I should take in university. There were so many options and possibilities. Until this point I had only been interested in maintaining a life on the farm, animals, and sports. I thought about perhaps being a gym teacher or maybe eventually looking into being a veterinarian. Both of these ideas required I take some general class requirements first so I decided to pick some that sounded interesting. I entered into sociology, chemistry, psychology, and geography. It was a real mixed bag of classes and I was not sure how these would eventually help me get a career. As always I gave it my best effort to make it work. A few weeks in I found my newest interest. Psychology. I loved that class and professor Martin was so amazing and engaging. I began to become fascinated with human behavior and wanted to know so much more. I now felt my calling was to work with people. I was not set on what capacity yet, but I really wanted to help people with their problems and difficulties. Working with kids seemed like an appealing option. At this point the possibilities seemed endless and I was excited for the future.

My life had changed in other ways to. It was in my psychology class that I was assigned to work on a project with a boy named Tommy. He was cute and funny and there was an instant spark between us. This was a whole new situation for me as I had always been “one of the guys” growing up. I was the girl who tagged along with the boys to go shooting targets or fishing. The feeling that I did not want to be just one of the guys with Tommy was scary and exciting at the same time. After working closely together for about two months on the project we had become friends as well as research partners. We would go for a coffee after class most days of the week. No one had made me laugh before like Tommy could. One day near the end of the semester before we parted ways after our usual cup of coffee, Tommy asked me if I would like to go to dinner and a movie with him on the weekend. On the outside I tried to play it cool and said “Yes,

that sounds like fun.” Inside I was filled with excitement and the desire to scream! I was never more excited for the future than I was in that moment.

The Journey Into Life as a Woman Corrections Worker

In the winter of 1979 Tommy and I were married. I was 21 years old. Tommy and I had both graduated that spring from university and were embarking on a new life together. It was not only new in that we were now husband and wife but also in that we were both starting our new vocational lives after getting our education. I had continued my interest in psychology and had received a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. Tommy had pursued his interest in biology and had received a four-year Bachelor of Science. We were excited about the prospects of our future job positions. We would spend our evenings pouring over the classified ads looking for job opportunities related to our degrees. Tommy managed to get himself a junior position with an engineering firm helping them complete research on plant and animal populations. It was very exciting for us and things all seemed to be working out! After a few months of looking for jobs myself my excitement started to wane. I was not finding a lot of positions that were related to what I wanted to do or that paid a decent wage. Tommy was very encouraging and positive things would eventually work out. “Keep positive.” he said. “Something has to come up. You are smart and a great person, someone would be so lucky to hire a person like you.” It was at this time I became pregnant. We had not planned on having kids right away. We wanted to wait until things were a little more settled and we were more established. At this point we were living in a one bedroom rented apartment. We could not afford much more with Tommy being the only one with a decent paycheck coming in. Tommy was excited while I was apprehensive. He always was the optimist about everything while I considered myself the realist. Someone had to worry about the unexpected expenses and how much it costs to raise a kid.

I was a little discouraged about things, I guess I always thought and was led to believe, that by getting an education I would be able to land a dream job and a nice paycheck. The choice about following my passion for psychology may not have been the wisest decision I made when it came to my post secondary education. In order to be a psychologist I would have to take further schooling. This was something that was not possible for me now that Tommy and I were having a baby. It was also not something I was interested in as I felt it would be too difficult to be a new mom and a student at the same time. I felt as though I was over qualified for some of the positions I could potentially get that did not call for more than a high school education and

that I was under qualified for anything that was in a psychology related field. I also was feeling a little discouraged at the apparent disparity between what men and women were able to accomplish in the work force. Several times when I would arrive at a potential employer to apply for a position it was typically assumed I was there to apply for a secretary or receptionist role. Though I felt I was just as educated as any other applicant it appeared to me that men were getting the better, higher paying positions. This really irritated me. I had always believed I could do any job I wanted and any job as good as a man. Unfortunately my anger and feelings did nothing to change the situations I found myself in and I was left continually looking for something better.

I decided to take a position at a local day care. At least it was doing work with people and I always liked kids. Plus it would be good practice for when our baby came along. The pay was only minimum wage but it was better than nothing, which was what I was making by constantly searching for jobs.

Becoming a Woman Corrections Worker

In the spring of 1982 Tommy and I had our second son Trevor. I know you are probably thinking “but she said she was not ready for even one kid!” You would be right. We were not set up for another baby. We were still living in our one bedroom apartment. Our little two year old, Ryan, was still sleeping in a crib in our bedroom. We needed to do something about our situation, and fast, as we now had two little boys who we needed at least one other bedroom for. I was still working at the day care as it ended up working perfectly to take Ryan along to work with me so I could look after him along with the other kids. Lori, who ran the day care out of her home, was also gracious enough to let me bring Ryan along for free. I do not know what we would have done had we also needed to pay for child-care. Tommy, while doing well in the engineering firm, was still not making enough that we could afford a decent sized house in a safe area with good schools while paying down our student debt. We had to do something and as quickly as possible. I began the process of searching through the classified ads again looking for a better opportunity. I came across a posting for the Government of Saskatchewan for a position called *Adult Corrections Worker*. At first glance this job title did not seem particularly appealing. After all I had been working with children and did not have any experience working with offenders. There were two things about the posting that made me think it might be a good idea to apply. The first was that it was a job with the Government of Saskatchewan. A position with the

government would provide opportunity for job security that I would not otherwise be afforded at many other places. Second, they were looking for women and other minorities specifically to fill positions as part of being an equal opportunity employer. A job that was looking specifically for women made it sound like I might actually have a chance of landing it. I decided to drop by the listed address to get some more information.

I went into the government offices to get some more information about what this job was all about. I was informed that the job was at the newly opened men's correctional center here in the city. The center had opened in 1981 and they were looking at hiring more staff to supervise offenders serving their time in the center. The job was described as a dual-role between a caseworker and security for the center. It would be supervising offenders, the safety and security of the center, and also assisting offenders in their rehabilitative efforts such as applying for programs and work experience that would help them once they were released. This did not sound so bad to me. I did have an interest in working with people and helping them, even if this was not even close to what I had ever imagined. There was something very interesting about the idea of corrections. I had not really known much about this area beside what I had seen on TV or in movies. What ended up swaying me in the direction of applying was finding out the wage and job benefits! I had never had a job that paid into my pension before. Being with the government also meant a level of job protection and security that I had not had before. The job called for experience or education related to a human service field. Though I had not really used my psychology degree thus far I figured my qualifications fit into what they were asking for. Plus, I was a woman and that seemed to be what they wanted. I decided to apply and see what happened.

I was given a call the following week. They wanted me to come in for an interview. Part of me did not really think I would be called. I had not worked with offenders and had no experience in any part of corrections. I had not even really taken the possibility of getting this job seriously. When I told Tommy about the job I had concentrated more on the monetary gains of the job more so than what it actually was. Truthfully, I did not really know what the job entailed myself. Tommy did not seem very concerned about me applying for a job at a men's correctional center. He knew I was strong, smart, and capable of anything I put my mind to. There was not much I could do to prepare for the interview, as I had no experience in corrections so I just went in with a goal to try my best. I met a man and woman who worked in corrections that conducted my

interview. I was a little surprised to see a woman in the interview, her name was Jane, as it seemed like men conducted any other interview I had been to. This made me a little more comfortable and hopeful that I would have a chance at actually getting this job. They asked me questions to do with my reasoning through different situations and scenarios and about how I would handle them. I left the interview not having a good idea if I did well or not. It was hard to speculate on handling situations you have no experience or knowledge about!

Approximately two weeks later I was contacted again to come for a tour of the correctional facility. I guess my interview must have gone better than I thought. I had never worked, or even been, in a custodial situation before and was now curious about this new possibility. I thought that as a woman it might be nice to get the advice and perspective of another woman who was working in this position. I asked if there was anyway that Jane, the woman CW I had met during my interview, could be part of my tour around the jail. "Oh sorry, Jane is no longer working at the center." the tour coordinator told me. I was a little surprised to hear this. It was only about two weeks since I had seen Jane during my interview. I was disappointed, as I had really hoped to get to speak with a woman about some of my concerns. I wanted to know things about how the offenders were when interacting with women. Were they respectful? Were women doing any different jobs or roles compared to men around the center? Why was the center looking for so many women? What was the job like as a woman? Looking back maybe I should have been a little apprehensive or perhaps cautious about the situation with Jane leaving unexpectedly but there was no way I could have known why she or other women would leave such a lucrative job. I decided not to be discouraged and to gain as much knowledge as I could during the tour. My tour group consisted of 15 people. There was only one other woman in the group so I decided to introduce myself to her so that perhaps I could make a potential contact and ally in the hiring process. It was not only that she was another woman but that the 13 men in my tour group did not seem to want to do much talking or interacting.

Kathy, as I found out she was named, was friendly and in a similar situation to myself. She had done some work in the community with troubled youth but had not worked in an actual secure custody setting. Like myself, she was excited about the idea of job security and decent pay. We were shown around the center and the different units. Things were much more different than anything I was used to. It operated like a small community. The offenders were working various jobs around the center such as cooking and cleaning while the staff supervised and

interacted with them. In other places in the center staff were using their time to work on reports and applications with offenders. Things did not look that bad and from what I saw I felt that I would have no issue doing the job. I could see why they were looking for more women and minority staff members. From what I saw the total of both together I could have counted on one hand! We finished the tour and I said good-bye to Kathy. The next step was to wait to see if we were accepted into the training process, which if we passed, would mean being hired as a CW. I was really hoping both of us would make it so that if I was accepted I would have a friendly face present in the training.

A week later I got the call I was waiting for, I was selected to move into the training! The first part of the training was to do physical restraints and self-defense exercises. That was all I was told, that and to wear comfortable clothing. I arrived at the gym and saw many new faces. From my tour group there were eight men that made it, as had Kathy! I was so happy to have a friend there. There were other men trainees that I had not seen yet who had made it through the process in other tour groups. In all there were 22 of us that were going through the training process. I was a little surprised to see that there were no other women besides Kathy and myself. I was not sure if that meant not many women had applied or if some were eliminated so far during the hiring process. There was not much time to contemplate the situation, as the trainers were quick to get down to business. We went over all sorts of holds and defensive tactics. We learned how to use handcuffs and other tools we would need throughout the course of the job should we be hired. It was different and some aspects were difficult but I felt that I was succeeding in proving I could do the job. I was a fast learner and all my years of sports and helping work with dad on the farm meant I was strong and athletic. There were times I would actually catch onto things quicker than some of the men in the group. The four men who were training us all and running drills were pretty merciless. They wanted us not to have an easy time in order to learn. "Offenders are not always just going to let you cuff them." they would say. "You need to be ready for the unexpected." They wanted to push you to see if you would have what it takes in a high stress situation. I would come home exhausted at the end of the day. I will not deny it was hard and totally different from what I had ever done, but I liked pushing myself and proving that I could do just as well as any of the men in the group. There were a few men in the group who seemed to have a superiority complex when it came to working with either Kathy or myself. When being assigned to run a drill with either or us there would be the occasional

quip about wanting to practice on someone who was an actual challenge or that they did not want to have to go easy because they were working with a girl. The take no crap from anybody attitude I had from being a tomboy all my life just decided to suck it up and show them that I belonged there. I instructed them not to go easy on me and that I was not going to go easy on them in return. There were times I felt I was thrown down a little harder than necessary, perhaps to prove a point, but I refused to show any weakness or pain on my face. I refused to be looked down on as the weakest link of the training group because I was a woman.

During that time training, I had a difficult time balancing preparing for the job and being a wife and mother. I was used to spending everyday with my kids while working at the day care. It was as close as you could get to being a stay at home mom and still working. Going through the CW training was a much different story. After getting home and making supper for Tommy and the kids, doing a load or two of laundry, and getting the house in order I would read the corresponding book that I would be tested on after physical training until I would pass out from exhaustion. Tommy was very supportive of me in this venture. He knew I could do anything I put my mind to and that this would be no exception. This schedule went on for the week of physical training I had before I faced my evaluation. This was it. This was the biggest hurdle for me. I was not worried about the written examinations after this as I was used to that sort of thing from university. A physical test on the other hand required thinking and physically showing I had retained the physical aspects of the job and could do this job. My stomach was in nervous knots when it was my turn to run through the exercises that would seal my fate as a future CW. "Please remember everything," I chanted to myself before doing each component. I knew there were something's that could be unforgivable such as failing to double lock handcuffs. I carefully went through each station with my assigned partner doing the best I could. In 15 minutes it was over. There was nothing to do now but wait for the results. It was agonizing waiting to find out whether I had succeeded. The trainers individually gave us our results. I had passed! 100% actually! As one of my trainers had actually put it "I passed with flying colours!" The compliment was unexpected from the huge muscle bound man who it seemed had an inability to crack a smile. He did though; I caught sight of a smile when he gave me a pat on the back after giving me my results. I was lucky. Not everyone in our group passed. There were four men who did not pass the physical exam. As Kathy, who had also passed the physical training, later told me not everyone was happy for those who did pass. One of the men who had failed the training

actually alluded to Kathy that they must have gone easier on her in the physical exam for her to be going on through while he was not. We knew that was not the case. Let him be bitter about not making it through.

I had two more steps to go in the process of getting hired. I was not too worried about what was left to go through. The small exam that tested me on the knowledge of the physical defense and restraint tactics I had just learned I passed with no issue. Exams were my forte and I had studied hard every spare moment since receiving my training material. The next step was a week of classroom training on different aspects that would be important for us to know as future CWs. This was also an area I did not feel too worried about. I had done the same thing for years in university. The week flew by and I passed the final exam having only gotten one question wrong. I was so close to getting 100%. Though technically it did not matter as long as I was above 80% but I was always a bit of a keener and liked to be the best. I was ecstatic in having completed the process. It was long and tough but the hard part was over. Or at least that is what I thought back then. My new friend Kathy had passed as well. Well actually all the rest of the group made it through the rest of the training after the physical test. We were later told the physical test was where people had the most difficulty. It was now official. I was a probationary CW staff member and would start my two weeks of shadow shifts. These shifts would have me work along with senior CW members in the different areas of the jail so that I would be prepared to be assigned anywhere they may need me.

Before we could start our shadow shifts in the center we had a time to go in and get fitted for our uniforms. When I got there I was surprised to learn that they did not have uniforms for women but that women just had to find a size of men's clothes that fit them. When I expressed my surprise at this to the staff in charge of administrating the clothing he just chuckled and said, "Why should we have special clothes for the women? There are only about 10 of you working here. You guys think you should have your own bathroom, own change room, and now you want your own special clothes!" He shook his head. I picked out the clothes that fit me best. I ended up with this shirt where the sleeves were 10 inches too long and the pants were dragging on the floor. The staff said, "You will have to go get those hemmed." "Will the institution cover that cost?" I asked him. "No, sorry" he said "there's no budget for that." I also was given this tiny little ruffle tie with elastic around the neck. "What is this?" I asked the staff. "That's the women's tie." he said. "The women's tie!" I exclaimed. I found out the men got a real tie while

the women got what could be described as a bow. I then found out that the men got boots to wear around the institution while women were given a 20\$ shoe allowance. I asked the staff if I could just wear a pair of the boots instead and he said, “No, these are just for the men. Men have more of a need for boots than women because of the physical situations, so you will have to buy yourself some black shoes to wear on shift.” If I had only known then how much of my own money I would have to actually put into finding good quality black shoes to wear to work. The whole uniform situation left me a little discouraged. I hoped that the rest of my experience would not be so unaccommodating to women.

The shadow shifts were mixed in how I felt about them and how successful I felt they were in training me to be able to run a unit. Some of the senior staff were very helpful and you could tell that they wanted to help you to succeed and some were very indifferent to you being there. There were days on some units where I was instructed to do everything I was capable of doing. Completing unit checks, conducting the formal counts, making entries in the log book, and interacting with the offenders were all things I was introduced to by staff members who saw the value in teaching new staff so that they would be able to succeed once expected to work in a unit as a fully functioning staff member. One day I was assigned to work in a living unit, which was a unit that was modeled after living in a type of small community in order to help offenders learn to live a normal life. A senior woman CW, named Shirley, was in charge of showing us two rookies around for the day on the unit. Shirley was so helpful and you could tell she genuinely loved her job and wanted those around her to succeed, whether it is the new staff or the offenders on her unit. She showed me so much and aided me in understanding the role I could have in helping offenders confront the contributing factors that keep them involved with the justice system. Shirley called over one of the offenders that had been involved in the justice system since he was a youth. She asked if he would be willing to share with me the story about his upbringing and experiences while living on the streets of the city. This experience was invaluable for me and really helped me see the individual and understand how they could end up in custody.

Not all the senior staff in the center were as accommodating and as helpful as Shirley was. Some senior staff viewed new staff as an inconvenience and that they were above having to train new staff. These staff wanted me to sit back and not get in the way. I had been warned in the training and all the way through so far from numerous people that your first impression in the

center is imperative to your acceptance in the center. Your first impression would contribute to your reputation as a good staff or a staff that people would regret having to work with. “Don’t be a know it all.” they would say. “Senior staff want you to listen and ask questions. They do not care what you think you know about the job or what you might have learned from books.” If you come off as a know it all or someone who is afraid to go on the unit with the offenders everyone would know very quickly. Senior staff would discuss the new staff coming in and whether they seemed like they would work out on the job. During those shadow shifts where I tried just to stay out of the way I would try to observe all I could and gain knowledge through watching. I did not want to be one of those new staff that gained a bad reputation that might be impossible to change.

Being one of the two women who were in the new hiring group meant that myself and my friend Kathy would be getting two less units to see during our shadow shifts. Women were not allowed to work in the secure and remand units. This, as it was explained to us, was due to human rights complaints of male offenders as their cells were also where they went to the bathroom. It was an invasion of their privacy, they had argued, to have women looking into their cells at all hours of the day and night. These areas of the center were also where most of the defensive and compliance tactics we had learned in training would be utilized as this is where most of the offenders with behavioral or security issues would be housed. The men in our hiring group would get to try working in these areas and thus have more opportunity to use some of those skills. I did not let this bother me too much. I would have liked to experience as much as I could but places where they need to restrain and wrestle with offenders all the time did not sound that appealing to me anyway. The rest of my shadow shifts were uneventful and after a few days off I would start my scheduled shifts as a CW.

Being a Woman Corrections Worker

I was now working as a CW for approximately three months. So far I was making it work and things had gone as well as I could have hoped. I had some scheduled shifts and also went in when I could for call-in shifts. This was not always easy when trying to balance my schedule with Tommy’s and trying to be around for Trevor and Ryan. It was exhausting, as I had never experienced shift work before and I was working anytime of the day and night. It was difficult to not be able to read my boys a story and tuck them in all the time. I would often get home and they would be already asleep and I would just peek in on them or give them a gentle touch so not

to wake them. Working different shifts also meant that Tommy and I did not have as much time to talk and enjoy being with each other. It was hard on both of us and required some adjusting and prioritizing of things to do together but it was a sacrifice we needed to make in order to have a better life and be in a better place financially.

Being on a different schedule and often coming home to my family being asleep gave me time alone with no one to share my thoughts and experiences. Even if I could, there were just some things I could not or would not share with Tommy. First, there was an obligation of confidentiality where I could not share many of the things I witnessed or experienced around the center. Second, if Tommy heard some of the things I experienced or witnessed he might not be supportive of me working there. I decided to start journaling my thoughts, feelings, and experiences as a way of venting them. Journaling was something I once did as a kid but I had stopped in my teens when I got busy with sports and helping on the farm. I remembered that I had enjoyed it and thought it might be cathartic for me to write down my feelings. I did not write everyday or anything like that. Just on days I felt the need to or that were particularly emotional or frustrating for me.

Andrea's Diary

July 10 1982

I have had some different experiences with staff around the center and am still trying to get my footing in how to navigate all the different personalities and working styles of people I meet. The other day I was working with a gruff "old school" man in one of the units. I had walked in and tried to be friendly by introducing myself. "Hi, I'm Andrea" I said, sticking out my hand for him to shake. His answer surprised me and also let me know what kind of shift I would be having. "I don't care what your name is." he said. "It doesn't matter. All you are is a part-time honey. Go out and do the count and when you are finished that I will let you know what you are allowed to do next." "Ok." was all I could reply. It was best to just go with it and let him be how he was going to be. When Frank, that was the man's name, left the office to go get his lunch, the other woman on shift, Linda, said to me "I can't believe you let him talk to you like that. Letting things like that be tolerated makes it so we will never be treated like equals in here." While I understood what Linda was saying I also thought that calling Frank out on his behavior was not going to change what he thought about women in corrections. It might also make him resent women being here even more. I told Linda:

I don't think he means it in a malicious way. He is not used to women working here and he doesn't really want them here. It's his way of testing me out. In six months he will know my name because I will prove to him that I am a good staff member, who is capable and knows her stuff.

I can and will show Frank and anyone else who needs to be shown that I am a capable and competent staff member. It may take a little time but he will know my name and with it he will know I'm a good staff.

August 1 1982

During my first months on the job some of the staff were less than hospitable. I did not know until I started to hear things from women who had worked at the jail from the very beginning how much pressure and resistance there was to having women work in the center. I have been getting many negative comments such as "sweetie," "honey," "just another set of tits," and "something nice to look at as long as I kept my mouth shut." These comments were upsetting at first and I wondered what I had gotten myself into. I did not say anything and chose to ignore the comments and not give them the entertainment of knowing they got to me. I heard most of it should end once I proved what kind of staff I was and that I could be trusted to get the job done. I was also surprised to learn that what I was experiencing was not even close to the worst that some women previous to me had experienced in trying to break into men's corrections. Shirley, who I had met during my shadow shift, had told me some stories about things she experienced and that other women at this center and others around the province had experienced. One woman went out at night at the end of a shift to find her tires had been slashed. Left with no way to get home, no one leaving at the same time offered to help her. Another woman at another center had to endure male staff spitting on her when she was walking through the institution. Some men were not happy with women's presence and they did not care who knew it. Insinuations of inferiority and incompetence in the form of gender harassment were things women had to deal with. Sexual harassment like I felt I was experiencing seemed pale in comparison to some of the stories Shirley shared with me. Complaining or speaking out against these behaviors could cause you to get shunned around the center and labeled a "rat." Even on the worst days so far I am thankful that I have not had to endure anything that bad. It is a weird feeling thinking that I am thankful for the verbal harassment because I know things could be so much worse.

December 20 1982

So coming in being one of the only two women who were hired, I have noticed a definite disparity from the types of shifts and jobs I am being given around the institution compared to the men who were hired in my same hiring group. Though we are all junior staff on the same level and still all needing to prove ourselves, I find I'm not getting as much chance to really experience much of the job or learn things. I am on my sixth month of almost entirely night shifts. I understand that someone has to work them but I do not understand why I am getting so many more then the men in my group. Have I already somehow messed up or rubbed someone the wrong way? I'm starting to get paranoid that I have somehow come into someone's radar even though I have never had any poor performance pointed out to me. I might be able to tolerate the night shifts if I actually got the opportunity to do some real work when I do get to work other shifts. Most of the time it seems like I get stuck working the less desirable jobs such as supervising the medical unit or the holding cells for the offender's on watch for self harming behaviors. The men in my group seem to be rotating into the high response areas where they will learn the operations of the center and have opportunity to use their skills much more often. It seems like if there is a less desirable job or shift available I cannot be surprised if I am the one doing it!

January 15 1983

Today was a day I at least got some satisfaction while dealing with the same old ridiculous behaviors from some offenders. I was working in a living unit and it was mealtime, which meant the unit was full of all the offenders and they were all in the common area eating. Some of these guys just love an audience and cannot resist putting on a show for their "bros." "Hey Andrea. Can I get your phone number?" an offender asked me smiling while his friends looked at me. He probably did not even want my number but more the status if he was actually able to get a phone number not only from a woman but a forbidden one like a CW staff member. I was irritated and tired of these types of behaviors. I decided to have a little fun at his expense and since his friends were looking so hopeful for something to happen. I said, "No, why don't you give me your number so I know which calls to ignore." All his friend's burst out laughing saying, "You got shot down so hard bro!" The offender just sat there and said "whatever" and told his friends to "shut up." I just walked away satisfied. Hopefully he will learn his lesson about coming to me with such a ridiculous request again, which goes for his friends to. It made

me think of another time my humor strategy worked, when a guy made a comment about me being so dreamy. “Hold on” I said and I grabbed a garbage can and pretended to get sick into it. I started to laugh and so did all his friends. He said, “I can’t believe you did that.” I replied, “Well I can’t believe you tried that brutal line. I’m a professional here and that is not going to fly.” Even he saw the humor in it while also knowing that was not going to work with me. Sometimes it works to use the humor approach and send a message to a whole group. Nothing stops their actions like losing face in front of their peers. I still hate dealing with stuff like that as a woman CW but sometimes I come out on top.

April 4 1983

I had a really bad day today. There was a rumor being spread about me around the institution. I had gotten close with a male staff member from my hiring group. He was actually a guy who used to go to my elementary school but he had moved away when we were both in grade two. We actually never even recognized each other until we saw each other’s full names written on the schedule. Whenever we saw each other at work we would chat a while and reminisce about funny things from the past. Some of the people at work started to speculate about our relationship being more than just a friendship. Since I was still fairly new and a private person not many people actually knew I was married and a mother of two. The thing that made today especially miserable was that I was not even at work. A male staff member actually called me at me home to ask me if the rumor was true. This was the first I even heard of it. My heart just sank. I had been nothing but professional and appropriate in the workplace and now I was receiving a call from a person I barely knew asking me about a potential sexual relationship. I was devastated that my personal life was being examined and that I should have to worry about being scrutinized. This was also something I did not want to talk to Tommy about, as I did not want to worry him or make him suspicious over nothing. I denied the rumor to the staff that called me telling him “even though it is none or his or anybody else’s business, no I am not sleeping with David and am happily married.” I just hung up on him in disbelief that I would need to deal with this situation in the first place. I almost felt like going to my supervisor with this issue I was so upset. I just do not want to be viewed as a complainer who cannot take a little teasing. Staff are constantly speculating of the sexual relationships of other staff. I have also had staff ask me if my friend Kathy was a lesbian. I got upset and told them that was none of their business. This is something I have heard people say about other women around the center as

well. They question women's sexual orientation or speculate on whom they are sleeping with around the center. It always seems to come down to sex somehow. If you reject man's advances you must be a lesbian or if you are friends with a man you must be sleeping with him. When I complained to other women at the center I found out I was not alone with this issue. One woman CW had a male friend at the center who people speculated she was having an intimate relationship with. Other men would ask how she was in bed or ask questions about her body. Some staff had put up posters in areas where the male staff worked regarding his relationship with her being sexual. Even though there were supervisors in and out of the area no one had taken down the posters and told staff how inappropriate the behavior was. The woman went to her supervisor and told him about the poster's being put up in areas of the center. He just said to her "what do you want me to do about it?" He offered no help or advice on the situation. The male staff eventually told her that he was newly married and he could not risk the types of rumors that were going around about him and her together at work so that he thought it was just better if they did not talk to each other anymore. What was just an innocent friendship was turned into something sexually demeaning and harassing for both staff.

June 6 1983

Today I experienced something I never want to experience again. Unfortunately the reality of my situation is that I cannot guarantee that. I was escorting an offender to another area and I was by myself. This inmate was being really irritating and disrespectful all shift. "Hey baby" he had called out every time I needed to walk by his cell. I started the shift by just ignoring him, hoping it would go away after he tired of not getting a response from me. He was persistent though! Too bad he never thought to put this kind of energy into working on his issues and being productive in his life! Later on was like, "Hey what's your name pretty girl? Maybe we can get to know each other when I'm out." I was starting to get really irritated with him. Later I made what I thought was a pretty good attempt at both shutting down his behavior and diffusing the situation. He was calling out for the "hot guard" and I brought a male staff member with me. "Here he is!" I said. "This is who you are asking for, right?" I then chuckled at the look on his face. This is crap that I need to work harder to prove my authority and deal with attempts to pick me up while I'm at work. I have done nothing but be professional in my actions and want to be treated as that, a professional, a CW. That was not the worst of it unfortunately. Later when I had to move him to a different cell so that we could exchange his mattress he reached out for

me and tried to grab me. I was shocked at first and reacted by slapping his hands away. “What the hell!” I yelled at him. I called for the staff in the next room and told him what happened. I left the area. I needed to calm myself down. I was ready to explode. How dare he feel he can put his hands on me! Sexually based harassment from offenders is always an area that gets me mad. I did nothing to indicate that I was interested in his advances. Now I wondered if my idea of saying nothing was wrong and using humor did not work. I should have been more adamant that he was being inappropriate. He was in the wrong and now here I am wondering if this was somehow my fault. I could not win in this situation. In the end I decided to write him an institutional charge for indecent behavior. Hopefully that would send him a message. When I gave him the charge he played dumb saying that that was not how it happened. “Deal with it” I told him. I was so done with him. I also hated having to write the reports and charges dealing with sexual behaviors like this. It is embarrassing to have the whole institution know what you experienced and it gives me a sense of shame almost that I have to deal with this or cannot deal with it so that it comes down to writing a charge.

September 10 1983

Today I was working in one of the center dormitories. Around lunchtime there was a fight between two of the offenders on the unit. Once back up staff arrived, I entered the unit to help handcuff and search the offenders for weapons. After we had removed the offenders from the unit and were writing up the charge reports I was called over by a senior male staff member. “Andrea,” he said “next time you have a situation like that you should have the offender be on his knees to cuff him and search him on the ground.” I thanked him for his help, as I had so far not had much opportunity to use any of my handcuff and restraint skills since going through the training. I was more than willing to accept feedback on my work and eager to learn how to be as effective as I could on the job. I had viewed the situation as positive until he added in the last part when he said, “Well you are a young lady and next time you will know better what to do.” Did he really need that “lady” qualifier in there? Why couldn’t he just recognize that it had more to do with me being an inexperienced junior staff member than a woman? I do not think that any of the men from my hiring group would have done any better. It turned what could have been a positive teaching moment into something where I felt judged and viewed as less adequate because of my gender. I just want to be viewed the same as any other CW in the center.

November 16 1983

Sometimes you try to be a nice person and it all gets turned around on you. There was some construction on the unit today and there was no access to the shower area. Several of the offenders were complaining about not being able to access the shower and how the situation was infringing on their rights. My partner and I decided to cut up pieces of some new kitchen cloths and offer the offenders homemade face cloths in order for them to be able to somewhat wash. My partner and I were pretty pleased with ourselves and thought the idea was ingenious! I was on the unit handing out the cloths when one of the offenders said to me "I only want a sponge bath if you are going to give it to me." Of course he also said it in front of other offenders so they can watch the drama unfold. I told him very clearly that that behavior was inappropriate and I did not want to hear such comments from him again. I decided I had better write an institutional charge for good measure to make sure the message was heard. I really hate dealing with behaviors such as this. Here I am trying to do my job and the offenders and sometimes the staff are sexualizing me. I just want to do my job in a professional manner and even when I think there is nothing wrong with my behaviors someone has to come and throw some sexualized aspect into it. I just want to be viewed as a CW and not have to worry about being sexualized in a situation that is not sexual in any manner. It is hard because I do not think of myself as a woman while I'm at the institution. Often, I do not even see these types of behaviors coming because here I am wearing a boxy uniform that leaves a lot to the imagination and looking very plain and I'm being looked at as some sort of sex symbol! I guess I have to realize that even though I do not think of myself as a woman in these situations there is no changing that other people will. These are the issues I have the most difficulty dealing with.

February 11 1984

Today I got to meet up with my friend Kathy on shift! It seems like it had been ages since I saw her last. We did not get assigned to the same shift rotation and have been working a lot of different shifts. She told me about a negative experience she had recently over the ending of a relationship she had with a fellow staff member. It was not my place to judge Kathy about it but I had been worried about this very thing when she told me that Jeremy from our training group had asked her on a date shortly after finishing the physical restraint training. Things seemed like they were working out for them for the first few months but then working different shifts and never seeing each other took its toll and the relationship ended. Last week Kathy was working in

a unit in the main building when a couple of male staff members started asking her questions about her relationship with Jeremy. The questions seemed innocent at first but then started to get inappropriate and degrading such as being about Jeremy's penis size and their sex life. These guys barely knew Kathy and yet they put her on the spot with uncomfortable questions. I could see the start of tears in Kathy's eyes and I could tell she was very bothered by the comments and questions. Who do those guy's think they are asking her personal questions like that? What Kathy does is none of their business and it is very unprofessional of them to be talking about such things in the workplace. Making dirty comments is very juvenile and we are supposed to be the people setting positive pro-social examples for offenders. Behaviors that do nothing but make people uncomfortable should not be allowed in the workplace. I wondered if they were giving Jeremy the same grief they were giving Kathy or if it was just because she is a woman that they feel they can say whatever they want to her.

April 27 1984

I was really irritated at the boss in charge of the center this shift. I had worked most of my shift in the main building. At 11:00 I was contacted by the boss to move me out into a living unit so he could bring a male CW in to the main building to replace me in order to deal with a potentially volatile offender. I was left feeling put out. Why does he think that I cannot help out with a situation like that? If I was given an opportunity to work on my skills in this area I feel I could be a valuable staff member to have in those situations. Not only that, but often these types of volatile situations can be deescalated by talking with the offender and trying to work things out. Acting out behaviors often are a means of communication and the offenders can be worked with on a verbal level. I would rather not have things get to a point where they have escalated to the physical level if I can help it. I think most of us women, perhaps because we know instinctively we are maybe not as strong physically, have good verbal skills to work with offenders that have just as much value as physical skills. There was not much I felt I could do and I was not prepared to plead my case for keeping me in the main building so I did as I was told. I do not really need to make a case of insubordination or make someone mad at me. I already get assigned to the least desirable placements pretty often as it is! This situation has happened to me several times. One night I was supposed to be working in a unit I was assigned to when I was bumped out of my assigned unit so they could put a male staff in there. The boss on duty was an "old school good old boy" and it was pretty clear he was trying to look out for

another “good old boy.” Why on nights when the offenders in that unit are all confined to their cells would he need to move me and assign a male staff there? This staff was less senior than me and not assigned to that unit while I was. This mentality that men should work the higher security areas while women should work the low security areas can be irritating and nonsensical. I get that behaviors are more likely to happen in high security areas but that is also where the inmates are locked up most of the time and you may only have a few offenders out at a time. In the low security areas when things go wrong you can have as many as 36 offenders going out of control at the same time. There is a persistent view that women should work in the low security areas so that they can take care of the casework. Some men even refer to casework as “women’s work” and think that they are above having to learn how to do it or complete it. It is beneficial to have all staff, no matter what gender, get experience in all areas and in completing all aspects of the job.

August 3 1984

I have been learning that sometimes you just have to go with the flow and let things happen. If I’m too serious while on the job I find I just feel worse and it doesn’t make my job any easier. The other day I was working with this male staff and he made a comment to me about how big my boobs are. Part of me wanted to tell him off for being sexist and inappropriate. I decided to start giving it back to him. “Thanks” I said. “You have a pretty big set of boobs yourself. What size bra do you wear?” “That’s not funny,” he said and he left the office. My strategy worked. There were no more comments from him. Another woman I was working with talked to me about it and her outlook made sense. She said:

Some of the harassment male staff give the women is a test. They want to see where your head is at and whether you can take it because you are going to get it from the offenders. They want to see if you are going to be solid and strong enough to make it in that environment because some women don’t. When you are their partner they need to know you are strong mentally.

She told me that joking around and not taking things too seriously has allowed her have a good rapport and working relationship with the male staff, at least the one’s who genuinely don’t hate women. “It has also made my job more enjoyable” she said. “If they were going to dish it out, I gave it right back.” We laughed together at some of the stories she shared with me about how she has coped with things she had experienced on the job. “Sometimes” she said, “you just have to

laugh when the other option would be to cry.” She was right. If I let every little thing get to me I am going to be pretty miserable in my time here.

September 25 1984

Today something happened that made me really mad. There was a fight out in one of the living units and at that time there was one woman and one man on shift. They called for assistance to the unit and by the time staff had gotten there the fight was over and the offenders involved were restrained. A big muscle bound male staff that had responded got there and pushed the woman staff off of the offender and took her place. He literally shoved her out of the way! Why did he think he needed to do this? The situation was over. The offender was listening and she had the situation completely under control. There was no need for his “assistance” at that time. He basically loosened the control of the offender so he could gain it again. He did not push the male staff that was holding the other offender out of the way. I hate when men take the attitude that women need to be rescued or assisted with any physical aspect of the job. She did her job effectively and I’m sure she could have handled the last part of escorting the offender away from the unit with staff. Instead of recognizing a competent woman staff, he went on his beliefs that woman cannot do the physical aspects of the job. It is like we are damned if we do and damned if we don’t sometimes. If women do not respond they look incompetent and like they are scared to do the job and even when they do respond there is always someone who thinks they can do it better. How are we supposed to succeed and prove our abilities?

December 5 1984

Ugh there are some days I just hate being a woman in corrections. You cannot win. With the offenders you are constantly getting your looks scrutinized. Walking through the yard to go home for the day all the offenders were making cat-call, whistles, and banging on the unit windows at any woman staff member who was walking by. Feeling like all eyes are on me can make me feel so uncomfortable and awkward. I deal with these types of behaviors and then later an offender will make rude comments about my looks calling me “ugly” or saying “bitch you should hit the gym.” If its not one thing it’s another. It does not seem like the men here have to deal with this type of harassment as much. I was told from the beginning that you need to have a thick skin to work here and I guess they are right. I have to not be sensitive when it comes to myself. I do not have to become a completely insensitive individual but I cannot let this stuff get to me or I will not survive working here.

February 18 1985

I'm getting really frustrated with some of things that I am expected to do around the center because I'm a woman. Male staff are continually expecting that I will do things for them such as making the coffee and doing the tidying around the unit. I come in and the garbage has not been emptied in days and the ashtrays are all full. I do not even smoke and I am expected to empty the disgusting ashtrays of people. I actually said to one of the staff the other day "Is this the way you treat your wife?" "Well actually yeah" he said. "My wife does all the cleaning around and the house, and unlike you, she doesn't make a big deal about it." "Well I'm not your wife, or your mother, so I will not be cleaning up your mess" I retorted. It isn't just the staff members who treat me like I'm different because I'm a woman. My supervisor does too. Every meeting, it is me who is asked to write down the meeting minutes or grab items that are needed. I try to put the focus on someone else by saying "Well I did it last time." but usually he just comes up with some underhanded compliment such as "Aww come on, none of these guys writes as nice as you." It is the same as doing casework. Many of the men around here refer to it as women's work and they think if they don't do it someone like me will eventually pick up their slack. Unfortunately most of the time this is true, as my supervisor will always come to me and say, "Andrea, do you think you can fix this up or look it over?" Usually this means that the casework is only partially done and he wants me to complete it rather than read it over. I did not enter this job to be held to a different standard than the majority of the employees. Part of what drew me to the job was that men and women were held to equal standards, I guess this is only true on paper though.

May 3 1985

Some things I have to put up with at work are really degrading. The offenders are essentially allowed to put any individual they want on their visiting list. On occasion when I have gone up front to pick up the visitor I have been in the position of escorting a prostitute back to the unit. She would arrive on the unit and say to me "Which one is he?" They would go into the visiting room and do their thing while the rest of the offenders would pretend to not be interested and enthused about what was going on. I made many complaints about this situation to my supervisor. Not only was it degrading to myself and other women but also offenders being able to bring known prostitutes and addicts into the institution was a security concern. Another issue I found very degrading was the continual presence of pornographic material around the

center. This was allowed to be brought in on both sides of the glass, the staff and the offenders. I had to see it plastered all over the unit while checking the offender's cells and common areas and also the magazines lying around in the office. I would complain to my supervisor about the presence of pornography not being appropriate for a professional work place. My complaints were not taken very seriously. Some men had told me to "mind my place" and "what business do you have coming into our institution and trying to change everything. This is a men's institution." I decided not to waste my energy on changing it and just put my head down and do my job - even if it meant I had to check rooms plastered from floor to ceiling in vaginas and breasts. It wasn't until one of the head directors from Regina came to tour our facility and speak with staff that I was actually taken seriously. It was my job to show him around the unit I was working in and he was on the unit during the time I was conducting the cell checks. I decided to take him into one of the offender's rooms that I knew kept a neat and orderly room. This offender also happened to be a homosexual. When I took the director into the room he gasped with shock. This offender also had the same proclivity for pornography that the other offenders had but his was for male pornography not female. I chuckled to myself at his reaction. After showing him a cell check and the offender's room the director said to me "Wow, that was an awkward and uncomfortable room to be in." "This room" I answered "doesn't make me as uncomfortable as all the rest of the rooms." He asked me to elaborate. "Well, the rest of the rooms are covered in the same type of pictures but they are of women." He was astounded that this was being allowed in the center. I told him that I had spoken with my supervisor and told him I thought it was demeaning to women and unhealthy for the offenders who are supposed to be developing rehabilitative skills such as viewing women as people entitled to their sexual rights. "These men are supposed to be learning to treat women with respect and be rehabilitated to a community where they must live amongst women" I said. "This does not show them anything but that it is alright to sexually objectify women and that we are all accepting of it," I said. He listened to me and said that he agreed and that once back in Regina he would be speaking with his colleagues about why this is being allowed. It was validating and frustrating at the same time. I was actually getting through to someone about my concerns and someone seemed to actually see the value in what I was saying. The downside to it was that I had said this all before and the only reason I was being listened to now was that a senior director got to experience being uncomfortable in a room full of male genitals. I knew that if anything came

from this and pornography was going to be disallowed in the center that I would not be making any friends and would actually more likely make some enemies. Change happens very slowly in corrections and there are many people who are happy with things the way they have always been. Women coming in and making changes is not looked too kindly upon but I have always been the kind of person who would try to make positive change where I could, if at all possible.

June 20 1985

Today I was doing a shift in the control room, which is the unit who responds to most of the situations occurring around the center. Several staff and myself were down in the admitting area processing the new offenders coming into the center. One of the offenders started to get aggressive and was acting out. The group of staff, including myself, worked to gain physical control of the offender and put handcuffs on him. After the situation was resolved and we returned to normal work in the area one of the staff said to me, "Great job in there, Andrea. Most girls wouldn't have gotten in there and done anything." "Thanks" I said. I had mixed feelings about the comment. On one hand I was proud to have shown my ability and usefulness and was recognized for my competent behavior but on the other hand I was a little put off by the "most girls" comment. Why couldn't he have just stopped at "good job?" It felt like it was a qualified comment like "you did good for a girl." He didn't feel the need to commend any of the male staff that were involved. To me it showed like he felt that most women in the center weren't pulling their weight or doing their job. It's funny how when women do something good it doesn't extend to the other women around the center but when women do something inappropriate they are judged as a group and their place in men's centers is questioned.

July 17 1985

Today was a weird day. I experienced something I had not experienced before. It turns out that maybe sometimes there is a benefit to being a woman CW. I had a discipline issue with an offender. He was screaming at me and swearing; name calling, the whole nine yards. The situation was heated and there was no sign that he was going to calm down. At one point he grabbed his cup of hot coffee and I was sure that it was going to be coming for me. I backed into the office and shut the door. He was still holding it and I needed to give him some time to calm himself down and start thinking rationally again. Eventually he went to his room and we were able to lock it for everyone's safety. At the time other offenders were around in the unit and had observed what was happening. An inmate who I had worked with previously on another unit

came to the office and was like “ I thought for sure he was going to throw that hot cup of coffee at you.” I said to him that I thought he was right and it was a little bit of a hectic moment. The offender then said something to me that I found very surprising. He said, “Don’t worry, Andrea. I would not have let that happen to you.” I was taken back. Though I had what I considered to be a good rapport with this offender, he certainly did not owe anything to me or need to help me. He said, “Real men don’t hurt women and I don’t stand for that while I’m around.” That day I realized two things. First, there is truly a benefit to establishing a rapport with the offenders you are working with. It helps to talk with them and help them in the ways you are supposed to because they remember those people. Second, that while being a woman in the institution certainly brings with it a lot of issues, most of them negative, there are some benefits to being a woman. There are those offenders who respect women and do not want to see them hurt. They have a kind of an old fashioned code of chivalry towards women. I have really tried to help offenders in their views towards women in my time on shift. I have always viewed it as a lot of these guys are coming in for various reasons and often times one of the reasons is that they have learned that they can treat women in a disrespectful way and can get away with it. This included their wives, mothers, sisters or any other female involved in their lives. Showing these guys a positive woman authority figure, and that it is not tolerated to treat women with disrespect, can help address this issue. I try to educate offenders on how they can get further with treating people in a respectful manner than they would by being disrespectful. They may find themselves in the position of having a woman boss someday. Thinking its tolerable to refer to women as “bitches” all the time will not allow someone to get very far in the workplace. Instead of getting mad at them and writing a charge every time they mess up I try to talk to them and have them see alternatives to their thinking and their behavior. They expect to get punished or stomped on for their bad behavior. Talking through the situation and then going back to treating them like human beings sets an appropriate example for them and helps them to learn from their mistakes and hopefully move onto more positive life choices. I have always viewed it as my job to help offenders view women with respect, and having women working with male offenders helps to challenge their negative views of women.

August 23 1985

Today something happened that made me feel really good both about myself and about being a woman in corrections. I had been assigned to work in the control room. This area is

typically full of men and it can be a difficult place to work depending on who your partners are. I had gotten to my shift pretty early and was sitting in the control room chatting with one of the men who worked there. I walked this staff, who has a reputation for not working well with women and being a hothead, and the first words out of his mouth when he saw me were “I don’t fricken’ think so. You’re not working here, you’re new. I’m going to be calling the boss and telling him your not working in here today.” Tim, who I was chatting with and was a more senior staff member, said to him “No I don’t think so, Andrea is staying. If you don’t want to work with us you can tell the boss you want to move. I would rather have Andrea back me up in a fight than you.” The look on his face was priceless. He ended up staying to work the shift but he would not speak with Tim or I the whole shift. “Thank you” I whispered to Tim. “You don’t need to thank me” he said:

Don’t ever let people like him talk down to you like that. You passed your training with flying colours and you are a hard worker. We need to all be on the same side in this place and I know you have shown which side you are working with. His attitude that women shouldn’t be working here is crap. Being a hothead with a terrible temper is more dangerous than having women working here.

November 6 1985

Sometimes I can’t help but think to myself that this job would be way easier if I was a man. There’s some things that myself and other women have to deal with that makes the job more difficult because we are women. Sexually based innuendos and often times more obvious sexual behaviors from the offenders are irritating and also can damage one’s authority in the unit. The other night I was conducting my count in a dorm unit when one of the unit “tough guys” lifted his blankets up and said, “come on in.” The whole unit then proceeded to laugh. I just decided to ignore it and hopefully they would be done after their cheap laugh. The week previously I had been on the same unit two night shifts in a row and the same offender would masturbate when I walked by his cell. Catcalls, whistles, and other sexually based noises would be called out into the darkness when I would have to do my checks on the night shift. The night shifts were often the worst for these types of behaviors as the offenders knew I could not identify exactly who was acting inappropriately so my hands would be tied on addressing the issue. When I first started I had one unit who would call me “sexy girl” every time I worked there. I felt so uncomfortable about this. I did not know how to deal with it. I felt like I was back in

grade school dealing with a bully. If I got upset or let them know that I was bothered by it then they would know they got me and would continue. If I addressed the unit as a group I would also risk those offenders who may not have been aware of what the other guys were saying hearing it and then starting to say it as well. At the same time if I did not shut down the behavior then I was worried about what other staff may think. They might wonder if I was condoning the behavior or that they would wonder if I was doing something to encourage it. I would stress about this situation every time I was on shift in that unit. When I was away from work I would worry about going back. Tommy would get tired of me saying how I didn't want to go back to work the whole duration of my days off. He told me it ruined our time together when all I could think of was work. When I would get home from work after dealing with this "nick-name" I would replay all the things I should have said in my head and vowed that next shift I had in that unit that I would handle the situation in that way. I started to get anxiety about working in that unit and about situations that would place me where the inmates would be likely to make comments such as the meal time or bedtime counts where I would have 30 sets of eyes on me. On the way to work everyday I would pray not to be placed in that unit so that I didn't have to deal with being sexualized and harassed. I was so bothered by it that I sought out the advice of my supervisor. He said that I should address the issue head on:

Sexualizing you in front of the other inmates is a security issue. I was dealing with a similar situation with another woman staff in another unit and I advised her of the same thing. If the unit does not view you as being in a position of authority then you can't expect the offenders to respect you or listen to you which means the security of the unit is at risk.

I understood what he was saying and I had decided that I would start to confront the situation instead of avoiding it. I really appreciated that my supervisor recognized that what I and other women were experiencing was important to deal with and shut down in order for the institution to operate successfully. Not all men take the same view. One night I had a particularly disruptive unit, where the offenders were throwing items at the office and yelling things like "fuck you, you fat bitch" towards me when I attempted to regain control in the unit. I went the shift supervisor for assistance in dealing with the situation. He said to me "You know Andrea sometimes you have to be willing to tolerate some of those behaviors in here." I started to get upset and said, "Why should we have to tolerate these behaviors. We shouldn't be minimizing the situation and

should be sending a message that it is not tolerated.” “There’s no need to get emotional Andrea. Sometimes you just need to have a thicker skin and get over it” he said to me. I knew at that point I was on my own and there was not going to be any help offered to me. I was left feeling hopeless and that there was no point in trying to get help from this supervisor. I guess that’s what I get for working in corrections, at least that is what is seems was implied to me.

January 6 1986

Well trying to improve my work environment for myself and others has come back to haunt me. Several months ago I was working in one of the units when a manager I had a previous negative situation with came up to talk to me while I was speaking with an offender. This manager had shown an interest in me and would come on to me almost every time I saw him. I explained to him that I was a married mother and was not interested in his advances. I tried to do this very diplomatically at first but he was not getting the hint. I had started to get shorter in my responses but he seemed undeterred. This day he came up and said “You are looking really fine today Andrea.” right in front of the offender I was working with. I could not believe it! I have enough trouble getting the offender’s to treat me as a CW rather than a woman and now I have him setting an example of how I am treated by other staff! I pulled him aside and asked him “Please don’t sexualize me in front of the offenders. I have to take these guys out into the community and be their authority figure and when they see staff treating me like that it diminishes my authority and their respect for me as a CW.” I could tell he was taken back at me confronting him about the issue. His face was flushed and I could see the muscles in his jaw clench. “As you wish” he said as he exited the room. I had thought that was the end of it but I guess I was wrong. A couple weeks later I started receiving sexually obscene phone calls to my house. When Tommy would answer they would hang up but when I answered there were sexually obscene noises and comments that I never thought I would ever hear from people who were supposed to be my co-workers and work on the same side of the glass as me. Tommy was getting suspicious of the calls that were always hang-ups. He started to question me if I was having an affair. I was hurt by this accusation. Here I was having an awful time at work but now it was extending into my home life to. I was at a loss of what to do I and thought about going to the police as the behaviors I was subjected to were harassing and disturbing enough that I thought I might have a case.

March 4 1986

Yesterday, which was a Sunday, two senior managers came into the building and called me up front. One of them was the manager who I asked not to speak to me in a sexual manner. This was strange as management doesn't work on Sunday and also they would not tell me what it was about. I knew I had done nothing wrong but this was so weird it had me really stressed out. I asked them again what it was about and the manager on the phone was very rude saying "it doesn't matter what it is about, you are being given an order to get your ass over here and you had better comply." I had tried to remain calm even though my heart was beating out of my chest. "I have no issue coming to speak with you but I will need a few minutes to get a shop steward to take to the meeting." I said. The managers then tried to bully me into coming without a shop steward saying I needed to come immediately. I knew it was my right to have a shop steward as I had spent all those unwanted night shifts reading over my union booklet. As a union member who paid her dues off of every check I knew it was my right to utilize their services and I was damn sure I was not going to that meeting without a shop steward. I said again I would not meet without a shop steward and they eventually gave up. Today I found out that a woman I knew was at a social event on Saturday night and she saw the two managers drinking together and she heard them talking about me and how I was going to learn my place in the center. The one man did not like that I wouldn't accept his advances and it seems he is now out to get even with me. I guess they were planning out how they were going to call me up front and intimidate me. This makes me feel sick. All I asked was to be treated like another professional and not be sexually harassed and I get bullied by the people who are my bosses.

April 2 1986

I don't know what I should do. Things have gotten even worse. There is now a rumor going around that I was bringing drugs into the center. The manager I had spoke up against was one of the good old boys and had lots of friends around the center and in senior management. He did not like that I asked him not to talk to me that way and had rejected his advances. Even though he was married too, I heard he was used to getting what he wanted from women. I thought this situation would eventually die down and people would move on to harassing someone new but I see now I will be dealing with this for a while. Some guy actually spit on me while I was leaving the building today. I feel so hopeless. There is no legislation or policy on sexual harassment for me to argue that I am being treated unfairly. There is also no policy about

misuse of authority coming from the manager towards a subordinate staff member. I do not know how to cope with this. I have always tried very hard to separate my work life from my home life but this situation is causing so much stress I find I am becoming short with Tommy and the kids. I just don't feel like doing anything but sleeping but I can't even do that. Thinking about having to go back into the center the next day keeps me awake so I can't rest. I am getting pains in my stomach and headaches from not sleeping or eating properly. I do not know how much more of this I can take.

June 25 1986

I found out even more that has been going on behind my back. Apparently not only was I bringing in drugs but now I was also having inappropriate sexual interactions with an inmate. Things just keep getting worse. Apparently they took many of the people I worked with and spoke with them about my conduct. There is no evidence that I have done anything unprofessional at work but yet they pull my coworkers in to speak to them about me. They took my most important allies in the center, my partners, my backup, and insinuated to them that I might be bringing in drugs and becoming involved with an offender. How do I clear my name and how do these people get to understand that I did not do any of the things these managers are implying I did? When your senior manager tells you something about a staff and asks you to watch out for certain behaviors how are you supposed to know any different? You would never think these senior managers are just lying about a staff they dislike and are trying to get rid of. These people are the difference between potential life and death and they have completely tainted the relationship and planted a seed of mistrust. People would make comments when they saw me walking through the center about how I was an example of why women shouldn't work in men's corrections or how I am trying to arouse the offenders. One staff even came to me and said "I called your number when a particular inmate was on the phone and it rang busy. Were you on the phone with him?" The obscene sexual calls to my house started again and I had decided to get an unlisted number for our home. It was hard to explain to Tommy why I wanted to change the number. He can't really understand like I need him to. It is hard for people who haven't been in that environment to really understand what it is like.

April 11 1987

Recently my friend Kathy had been asked to be the acting supervisor of her unit while her boss was away on holidays. He told her that even though she was not the most senior staff on the

unit, her casework and writing skills were among the best he has seen so he knew she would do a great job on all the reports. Kathy told me she was pretty excited and flattered that her work was being recognized. I congratulated Kathy. I was genuinely happy for her and knew she deserved it. At first I hoped I might soon be given a similar opportunity but now I'm thinking it is more of a curse than a great opportunity. Kathy told me that several of the staff on her unit were questioning why she was selected to be in charge of the unit. "Sleeping your way to the top?" was what one man uttered to her when she entered the office. Another woman asked, "What did you have to do to get picked for that job? Clearly there must be a reason why you are Ted's favorite." Instead of thinking Kathy might actually deserve the opportunity for all her hard work they just accused her of having not earned the job or that she must have done something to get it. No one asked Devon, the staff that covered for Ted last time he was on holidays, why he got asked to cover the position or what he did to get it. It seems often that when women are promoted it is assumed they must have done something to get it or that they have not earned it. That attitude really makes me mad because it totally taints all enjoyment and positivity you might gain from trying to expand your competence and experience in the institution. It makes me wonder if I was asked to cover supervising my unit whether I would even want to do it. It almost seems like your life is easier when you are a woman if you just stay out of the spotlight and don't draw any attention toward you.

July 17 1988

I feel like things with Tommy and I are on really shaky ground right now. It is hard because he doesn't understand my job and how I feel about things or why I feel the way I do about things. This job, while I got it to make our lives better and decrease stress, has brought with it a set of complicated issues, which have affected my relationship and family life. The shift work means that Tommy and I sometimes go days without sitting down and having a real conversation. When we do get time to talk I can hear about Tommy's day but I can't really describe mine. The things I can tell him often just make him mad because he thinks its unbelievable that I have to deal with some of the situations I do but at the same time he has a hard time understanding why I let poor behaviors of other people bother me. He can't really understand what I go through, or the job. I really believe no one can unless you do work or have worked in that environment. Tommy is never there for any of the things that I experience. It goes the other way to. I have missed plenty of family and social events on account of not working a

Monday-Friday 9-5 job. Tommy and I have never been able to meet for lunch or a coffee like couples who work “normal” jobs. Tommy is not really part of my work environment or social aspects of the job. If I have ever gotten together with people from work, Tommy has been bored and not included because all we do is talk about work. It is hard for him to understand and I don’t blame him for that. I just know that over the years my working as a CW has taken a toll on our marriage.

January 29 1989

There’s times being a mother both helps and hinders my work as a CW. The positive part of being a mother, I think, is that it has provided me with a maternal side that has helped me be a positive role model for offenders and staff. I have taken younger staff under my wing to try to nurture them into being successful and to cope with a difficult job. For offenders they have been able to see me as a staff who they can confide in, and is willing to help them with their issues and to try to better themselves. Positive feedback from a woman when they have done something well can be so beneficial for offenders, and may be something they have never gotten their whole lives. On the other hand being a wife, a mother, and a CW has made me more cautious and protective of my kids. I have looked into the eyes of men who are pure evil and thinking of these men coming into contact with any children, especially my own, has caused a constant worry that is always in the back of my mind. Trying to balance a home life and shift work also takes its toll on me. I find some days I am short, with both staff and offenders, or that maybe I am not 100% mentally focused on the job. Stress at home can place me and my fellow staff in danger. I feel like I am dealing with so many roles at once, the wife, the mom, the chauffer, the coach, and the CW. It is a stress that myself and other women working as CWs have to endure. It can be so difficult to separate my home life and work but yet I realize I have to in order to survive. I feel like I have to emotionally withdraw in order to do this job. There are certain experiences and situations that women are more emotionally effected by. You have to have a life outside the center and take care of yourself. I know this all to well and I tell it to all the new staff. What I usually tell them after is that it is much easier said than done.

August 7 1989

Sometimes I just do not know how to cope with some of the things that go on in the institution. I have always prided myself on doing the best I can and putting effort into all I do. I have a work ethic that was instilled in me from a very young age from working with my dad on

the farm. The other day I was doing some casework for an offender and I decided just to sit out on the unit with him to talk about his plans and applications. To me my presence on the unit is not a big deal. I have to be out there to do checks anyway. Afterwards my partner made a comment about how I was “sure on the unit a long time today” which left him alone in the office. “Which side are you on?” he said. I did not think his comments were warranted but a little teasing is pretty commonplace around the center so I did not think much of it. I guess I should have taken it as a serious comment and a sign of things to come as today when I was getting lunch in the kitchen another male staff referred to me as an “inmate lover.” I was really upset by the comment but I just ignored what he said and went back to my unit. I’m damned if I do and damned if I don’t. If I never went on the unit I would be labeled as “lazy” and “scared of the inmates” but I go on the unit to do my required casework I get labeled by the staff around me as someone who is too close to the offenders. I wonder why the male staff that are out on the unit playing cards or watching a hockey game with the offenders do not get labeled in the same manner?

February 25 1990

I had some really emotional feelings on my shift today. I was assigned to cover the casework of a full time staff that was away on holidays. One of the offenders I had to prepare reports for was in on charges that were for sexually abusing a child. I always thought I could separate my professional and personal life well but for some reason this case really affected me. In reading his charges for my report I had a very difficult time reconciling my roles as a mother and those of a professional CW. I ended up taking a break and going to the washroom to just cry. I could not help but feel for the children in the situation and relating their hurt back to my own kids. I could not handle them suffering trauma like that. I usually do not react like this but there are just times that the stresses of life – work, my relationship with Tommy, and the kids add up to more than I can deal with at one time. I had no choice but to just wash my face and go back out to the unit to face the rest of the shift. This place is certainly no place for tears. I do not know if men with kids ever encounter these same feelings or if I am just more emotionally vulnerable as a woman to these feelings.

January 28 1996

Almost 15 years after the center was opened women are now allowed to work down in the secure and remand areas. This was totally new territory for me and although I may have met

some of the offenders previously during placements in other units I had never worked in that setting. These units were quite similar to what I had always imagined a jail to be like. Individual cells down ranges. Openings in the doors to receive items from staff members like their meals and supplies. It had taken several months of women being allowed down there before I had gotten my first shift. This area housed a group of very old school men who had worked together for a long time. As a woman I was not very welcome in this area. They had gone on a long time without our presence and they were not eager for change. My shift down there went as I expected it might. I was unwanted. The talking ceased when I walked into the room. One of them actually said "I don't think so" when I arrived and I overheard him calling over to the boss asking why his buddy was not down there instead of me. Unfortunately for him his buddy was out sick so I guess he was stuck with me. It was one very long shift. No one would speak to me or include me in anything. They would not even tell me what to do so that I could learn. Having never worked in the unit, and no other units were really similar, I needed help in order to learn the process. There was a lot of additional procedures and rules in this unit because of the behaviors and security needs of the offenders. I left the shift feeling pretty discouraged. I was not exactly new anymore, but entering that unit was like a corrections stone age. Nothing had changed since the center was opened and the men who worked that unit were happy with it that way. All the effort I had put into proving my worth as a staff basically did not matter.

March 17 1996

I had another shift down in the remand area today. Of course I should be so lucky to get stuck with a male staff who is notorious for his views that women should not be working in men's correctional centers. The day started off horribly and just continued from there. I had gotten on shift first and I could see the look of dismay when he walked in. He stopped in the open doorway and his eyes started to narrow as they settled on me. I tried to smile and be positive, offering to do as much as I could to be helpful on shift. First thing in the morning it seemed like he wanted to add some excitement to our day. He called the unit "heavy" - the resident troublemaker - over and told him he would not be getting the property items he had been waiting for. Not only was the offender not getting the items he wanted, but he was going to have to wait until the unit staff supervisor got back after the weekend to get the items. The offender was obviously upset. He started yelling and swearing and getting the rest of the unit going with him. The staff looked back at me with a satisfied look on his face. It really felt like he was trying

to say, “You see Andrea, this is why there shouldn’t be women working here.” It felt like he was testing me to see how I would handle the situation and the behaviors of the offenders. It was like he wanted me to fail so that he could add more “evidence” to his beliefs that I, and any other women, did not belong working there. When we weren’t trying to deal with a rowdy out of control unit he proceeded to tell me all of his personal opinions about why women did not belong in any men’s center. That was one of the longest shifts I have ever had. I am not too eager to work with him, or in the unit again.

March 22 1998

Several months ago I complained about the conduct of a male staff that was acting in an unprofessional manner on shift. He had been harassing me and another staff, James, about an intimate relationship he speculated we were having. His concerns about us were unfounded but most importantly none of his business. He was putting up posters in his unit and spreading rumors about me and the other staff. I went to his supervisor and made a complaint about his conduct and his bullying behaviors. If I had known how the situation was going to be handled I would not have bothered. I really thought that since we now had strict policies on our conduct and a zero tolerance policy on harassment that I may get some actual support on this issue. I found out from other staff that the supervisor of that unit told the staff in the unit “You better be nice to Andrea, or else.” The unit then had a good laugh about the “warning” they had received. The situation just got worse and I wished I had said nothing. The staff in the control room started to not open the doors for me around the center. They would make me wait or press the call button several times before being acknowledged. Often I would have to wait until another staff came who wanted to get through the door in order to get through. I wasn’t the only one being bullied. Other’s who were friends with me or friends with James were also being harassed. It seemed like a core group of good old boys were really trying to run the show and punish me and anyone close to me because I had complained about his conduct.

June 2 1998

Correction’s culture for staff is similar to the offender culture in that they don’t look positively on people who they consider rats. I went to a higher senior manager about the situation, as I did not feel that the initial complaint I made was handled in an appropriate manner. Telling a group of grown adults to “be nice” doesn’t solve any issues or send the message that harassment won’t be tolerated. It seems like they have a zero tolerance harassment policy but do

not enforce it appropriately. The situation has gotten worse the more help I have tried to get and the higher up the chain of command I have went. Now instead of just doing things I cannot prove are targeted towards me such as not opening doors, the attacks have become more targeted. This week someone wrote “bitch” across my personal locker. The person responsible also crammed gum into the locking mechanism on my lock so that I would no longer be able to open it. I tried to find out who it was but no one was willing to say who did it. I put in a request to the senior management to have them review the camera recordings from that shift to see if I could see who did it and I was denied. People who I had been friend’s with for years told me that they could no longer be associated with me while in the center because they were scared of becoming targets of harassment themselves. It’s a very lonely time at work right now. There are days I arrive and I sit in the parking lot for 10 minutes trying to talk myself into being able to go inside and face the situation. There are days I don’t feel I can take working here anymore but I can’t let them have the satisfaction of knowing that they have won.

September 5 1998

Over my years of working there I have seen an evolution in harassment and bullying of staff members. When I first started most of the harassment was directed at women and usually came from a group of male staff that did not want them there. Women had to face degrading and demoralizing behaviors as a group who were unwanted in corrections and treated as such. These days it seems as though no one is safe from harassment and bullying and staff of both genders are participating in it. I have seen posters made by staff indicating that a male staff was a rapist. These rumors originated from a woman staff at the center. Posters of a new woman staff were defaced with breasts and other sexually degrading drawings. Posters of staff of both genders were defaced with nicknames they have been given by employees they have just met around the center. People who have not even had the opportunity to meet the staff then get a first impression of them based on what they have seen on posters around the center. One newer woman staff told me she went around and collected all of the posters with her defaced picture and took them home with her and cried. What she must have thought about the people in the field she chose to work in I can only imagine. I had encouraged her to go forward and address the bullying with management but she refused. “Look at how they treated you when you said something Andrea” she said. “You have been here a long time and that’s how they treated you. What do you think they will do to me?” she said. Other women alluded to her deserving it because she came to work

looking nice and wearing makeup. Though the staff had done nothing wrong to challenge her competence or ability to work in corrections she was judged by her looks rather than her working ability. When I heard my co-workers talk about her I said, "I hope you don't talk about me like that when I'm not here." "Oh no Andrea, you have been here a long time and have proven your not here to get a date." "When I started the more senior women wanted to help you succeed and would mentor you." I told them, "They wouldn't sit here and demoralize one of their own for staying fit and wanting to take care of herself." When I told my co-workers that I did not think it was a fair judgment and women should stick together they were none to happy with me. One day I witnessed a group of young men looking at a picture of one of their male co-workers and laughing. They had gone onto his personal web page and taken photos of him and defaced them. They sat laughing about what a "fag" the staff member was. I kicked them out of my unit and told them they had better not talk about their co-workers in that way around me again or I would be going to their supervisor. The other day I saw a group of women staff openly bullying another woman while a group of men watched and egged them on. The good old boys club is present, it is just not as obvious as it once was. Now there is a group of women who are trying to be part of it and fit into the group. I told one of the younger women that I saw falling into it and who was strutting around the center like she was untouchable. "You are never going to be a part of it." I told her. No one is safe from being subjected to bullying and harassment anymore and the attacks are now more malicious and personal. People sit by and watch their coworkers and friends get picked on because they are too afraid to stand up to the dominant group. One man I worked with for years said to me in private that he knew who was involved in some of the harassment that was going on towards me when I had spoken up to management about it. I was surprised that this staff came forward and told me, as he was a good friend of one of the main instigators. "Terry," I said, "why are you telling me this?" He replied:

Andrea you are a good staff member and you have been here a long time. I don't think you deserve the things that are happening to you, and I don't want to participate in it but if I say anything to the guys about it I will be dead. They will make my life miserable. "But you are one of the 'boys' Terry" I said. "It doesn't matter that I'm one of the 'boy's Andrea. It's just how it is. You are with them or you are against them," he said. I appreciated that Terry was willing to tell me what was going on and he recognized it was not right to treat me like that. If only others would realize that they are treating one of their own worse than they treat the

offenders. There are other guys around like Terry, which just don't want to get into the traditionally good old boys milieu. Some of them would be considered new and some are from the old generation. I told one of my friend's, Darcy, about some of the things that had been going on with me and what I have seen happen to others. He said:

You know Andrea, it just gets old and tiring so it gets to the point where I just let it happen. I used to say 'cut it out guys' when I saw inappropriate stuff or I felt they were getting carried away with the vulgar talk but it's just gotten to the point where I am so sick of it and it doesn't change anything.

I knew what Darcy was saying. I used to want to change things for the better, both for myself and those around me, but it has just gotten to the point where trying has made things worse.

November 19 1998

Today one staff, Dwight, came to confront me about telling one of the staff who was being bullied about his involvement in it. "You're a bitch Andrea!" he yelled at me. I said, "Excuse me?" "What did you tell Joe about me?" he said. I replied:

What, Dwight? You didn't want people to know you are a bully and doing completely inappropriate things at work? Well I'm sorry I felt Joe had a right to know who his real friend's are here. You are wrong in treating me like this. How would you feel if your wife or daughter was being treated this way in her workplace?

Dwight responded back:

Well Andrea, I don't appreciate you having a big mouth. My wife and daughter don't work in an institution. Let's just call this a bit of hazing. If you don't mind yourself, you just might find that staff might take a little longer to respond if something were to happen to you.

I was stunned by his comments. This was a serious threat. My coworker's response to an incident involving me could mean the difference between life and death and he just told me I may not be able to rely on staff for help. I felt sick. I just turned and walked away. I needed to get some fresh air and if I were to stay I can't say I could have kept myself together.

January 9 1999

Seriously, I keep wondering if things can get any worse for me. I try to stand up for what is right and it get's me harassed and black listed in the center and now management wants to get involved. I got a call today from Tyler, a senior manager, who said, "Andrea, we heard about the

harassment you have been experiencing and we want you to come in and discuss it.” “Absolutely not” I said. “I tried to get your help with an issue last time and the situation just got way worse with the way you guys handled it.” “Well, Andrea we have a code of conduct here that requires that all instances of harassment be addressed so you are required to come and discuss it with us. This is not optional.” “Well Tyler, I do not have to come to a meeting with you and I will be discussing the issue with my union representative before I do anything.” “Andrea,” Tyler said, “If you do not come we will be looking at disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.” I could not believe what I was hearing. My complaints were dealt with completely inappropriately last time, which made my situation infinitely worse. Now I am being harassed to the point of them threatening my life and they are threatening to discipline me for not coming to their meeting? My faith in workplace fairness and the zero tolerance harassment policy is totally shaken. I went home totally discouraged and broken. Not only am I suffering at work but also now I have no one to talk to at home either. Tommy and I have legally separated. I can’t say it wasn’t somewhat related to my work and how it has affected me over the years. He was never been able to understand my job and the things I experience there. We had been having problems and disagreements for a number of years related to me working shift work. Shift work has affected my ability to be there for my kids and for Tommy when needed. Even though we discussed it before I had ever even taken the job and he said we would make it work he was wrong. He admitted he did not understand. When I would get upset about some of the safety related concerns at work he would be like “I don’t understand why you can’t just get over it.” Although I will never attribute our separation to work entirely it certainly did not help. Some of the people at work can’t even allow me to get through this difficult time in peace. As soon as people found out I had separated with Tommy they immediately started to question me on who I was having an affair with from the institution. It is a relief he has the kids tonight because I don’t think I can even function. I am just going to curl up in bed and cry. I don’t know how I can go back and do it all again tomorrow.

February 28 1999

Well the management finally started to leave me alone. I threatened to report them for harassment if they tried to force me to meet with them. I explained that I was “just having a bad day” and that they couldn’t prove it was anything more than that. They eventually dropped the issue. However, that was not before they pointed out that “Andrea, you have a lot of education

and experience maybe you should look into transferring into another area of government.” I did not even dignify that suggestion with a response. I shouldn’t be surprised at this point. Why should the corrections environment change when we can just ask the people who are being treated unfairly to leave? Most days lately I get much more respect from the offenders I work with than my coworkers. I can’t say I’m surprised though. I have witnessed senior management engaging in behaviors that are not professional, especially not for their roles in the center. I have seen them gossip and perpetuating rumors. I have seen a manager make sexually suggestive comments to other staff. They write on paper that we are a zero harassment workplace but in reality that is not the way it is. How can you expect staff to be any better if you are setting that example while being the face of management?

June 26 1999

Today at work I heard something very unfortunate. A woman CW staff who had been recently employed was found to have gotten involved with an offender in an intimate manner. What I heard is that she was his caseworker on the unit and eventually it had gotten where she started to cross the line in her boundaries with him. It was little things at first. Extended conversations that did not revolve around his case plan and programming while incarcerated. He then started to ask for little things like extra portions of food items and supplies for himself. Staff on the unit eventually got suspicious of her actions and reported it to management. Under pressure from questioning from a senior manager she admitted that she had gotten in over her head and developed feelings for the offender. She was recently separated from her husband and was under a lot of emotional distress. In talking with him about his relationships for his domestic violence program he made her feel comfortable enough to disclose some of her relationship issues. He seemed to give her an opportunity to vent but it soon evolved into a “shoulder to cry on.” He sensed the vulnerabilities in her emotions and before she could reflect on what was happening she crossed a professional boundary all women CWs vow would never happen to them. She was let go from her job immediately. I did not really know the woman who was involved and had never worked with her. It is weird though how when you are a woman CW, women you may have never met may affect you. The aftermath of this situation created a lot of issues around the center. The comments about “women don’t belong” in men’s centers became common again. Reasons like “women being here arouses these guys,” “women being around creates problems that men then have to clean up,” and “women cannot separate their emotions

while working” were prevalent around the center. To me it felt like myself and other women were being judged by the unfortunate decision of one woman. Staff around the center were getting suspicious of most actions of women CW staff. “Why did that offender stop to talk to you in the yard?” “Why was that guy hanging around your office so long?” It felt like important aspects of my job such as building rapport with offenders and developing dynamic security were being frowned upon and looked at as indicators of possibly unethical behavior. The atmosphere is so tense and divided right now. Phrases such as “witch hunt” are being expressed by the women staff. As if the environment is not difficult enough, but when something like this happens, women lose any advancement they may have made in being accepted in men’s institutions. I feel a lot of emotions about this situation and some very mixed feelings. I feel frustrated that I and others are being judged based on one woman’s situation. I feel sadness that this person was obviously having such a terrible and vulnerable time in her personal life that she fell prey to a master manipulator who could sense this vulnerability like a lion senses a wounded animal. Some of these guys spend their whole lives building up that skill so that they can use others for their own needs and wants when they are in just the right position to make a wrong decision. I also feel discouraged that there was no one who was able to either notice or care that one of their own was in need of support through a difficult situation. There was no one who stood up and said, “You are getting into dangerous territory and I think you should talk to someone.” There is no real support for women staff specifically, when they are vulnerable in the workplace. I feel anger at the double standard that women are subjected to when it comes to a violation of professional conduct in corrections. As there is an opposite sex component and the possibility of a sexual element people’s minds travel in that direction and wonder what else is going on. The fact is there are poorly behaved staff of both genders. In the past men have been implicated in bringing drugs into other institutions and even sexually assaulting a male offender, but typically these instances are kept undercover and minimized to the public and even staff. If a woman does these things however, it finds its way to the front page of the newspaper and her name is coming out of everyone’s mouth at every institution in the province of Saskatchewan. I was told once by a woman who had been at the center since the beginning that she knew of several instances where women were moved out of units in order to allow a male staff who had gotten himself into trouble to “hideout” until the heat died down. She told me that when inappropriate things are done by women they are often torn apart by their co-workers, including

other women, but the men often go right back to work like nothing happened. There is very much a double standard about how issues with women are viewed and every time something inappropriate happens, no matter what the severity, the questions about whether women should be working as CWs in men's institutions comes up again.

February 1 2000

Today I had an opportunity to pass on some of the knowledge and experience I have gained as a woman in corrections. I was working with a brand new hire who was just trying to find her place and her strategy for working here. When first starting, many of your moves and how you will handle situations are planned out. I know I asked myself questions such as "How will I handle defiance from inmates trying to intimidate me because I'm a woman? How will I handle sexual behaviors from offenders?," and "How will I prove my competence and worth?" Especially as a woman, you have to decide what kind of staff you are going to be and how you are going to present yourself. It can be an awkward and uncomfortable situation to be a woman on a unit. This particular staff was struggling. You could tell she was uncomfortable with comments the offenders were making and when they were not listening to her, she was trying yell and belittle them into submission. After the offenders got tired of her being on the unit yelling at them they started to be rude. I spoke with her and gave her some advice I thought might help her. I advised her to remember where she was and to keep in mind that on any shift the possibility exists that you may not come out of the institution. "As a woman," I said, "we need to have an awareness of our strengths and abilities." I advised her that these men would not appreciate being yelled at and belittled and it is not a good strategy to escalate situations because our physical strength may not be as effective if it escalates to a physical altercation. Women can use different strategies such as reasoning with the offenders and using our dynamic security to gain compliance from offenders. I also advised her not to let the comments and names affect her. "This will not be the last time you are called a bitch in here" I told her. "In fact" I said "you will likely be called much worse before you are done your time in this place." I told her that having a thick skin and the ability to brush things off would be valuable for to her have while she worked in corrections. "It is just a name" I said:

it's not who you are and you need to remember that. You can't demand respect. It is a balance between not overcompensating and being too meek with the offenders. Don't be

a damsel in distress but don't try to be a super hero. Respect is something you must earn from both staff and offenders by proving yourself.

She seemed to listen to my advice and thanked me for the help. Whether she will listen or not I don't know. Each woman typically needs to find their own strategies for coping with the things we are unfortunately required to deal with as women. I know I appreciated the mentorship of a woman who was working this job before me and I never forgot her words of kindness and advice.

July 13 2000

Over the years I have seen a lot of changes at the center and not all these changes have been positive. When I first started we used to work closely with the offenders in order to help with rehabilitative efforts. Now due to high offender counts we have shut down classrooms and turned them into dorms. The attitude of some staff and their views on dynamic security and establishing rapport with offenders has changed drastically. It used to be staff were out on the units with offenders for much of the shift. Interacting with offenders gave a sense of the unit dynamics and issues that may be happening. It seems that now that is frowned upon. Or maybe it is because I'm a woman and being seen as interacting with the offenders is viewed as the start of an inappropriate relationship. The other day I went onto the unit and an offender I had known for years said "Hey Andrea, how about a game of cards?" "Sure!" I said. We used to play cards all the time with the offenders on the last unit I worked on. I stayed out on the unit for about an hour playing a game of cards while my partner watched us. When I returned to the office my partner started to question me about it. "What are you doing out there?" she said. "I was just playing some cards," I said. "We are supposed to be on the unit every hour anyway and these are low security offenders. It is called rapport building" "Well I'm not comfortable with you being out there like that. They are all just pieces of crap anyway" she said. I said:

You realize that these are humans and at some point they are going to get out and walk the street among us you know? We want them to feel like they can come to us if there is something up on the unit. It can save lives.

She did not talk to me for the rest of the shift. Later when I was leaving, the shift boss said to me. "Andrea, just so you know you should maybe stop playing cards on the unit. Other staff are saying you are a slut." I couldn't believe what I was hearing. "Seriously Bobby, you are old school. You know how we used to do things. Did you say to the staff 'maybe you should be out

there doing your job instead of calling your partner a slut?” He said, “You know you are right Andrea, I really should have.” “Yeah you should have,” I said. “You think the old guys out in the living units get judged because they are out playing cards? I don’t think so.” I was so angry about the situation. I told my immediate supervisor about it and he said “Andrea that’s great you were spending time out on the unit. I hope you keep it up.” “Not a chance” I said. “I don’t need to be getting called a slut for doing my job. It’s not worth it.”

Andrea’s Story Epilogue

I could have happily gone my whole life not having gone through some of the things I went through in my time as a woman CW in a men’s correctional facility. Now that I’m retired, looking back on my career, there were times I didn’t think I could survive the harassment and abuse that I endured. Without having the life I had away from the center I likely wouldn’t have. My friends and family helped me get through some of the worst treatment of my life. There were times I definitely thought about leaving or even in my darkest hours about leaving my life as well. Looking back it is ironic how some of the people who fought so hard to get me to leave or get me fired didn’t last while I did. Some of them actually didn’t fare so well in their lives, which is unfortunate for them and may be a touch of karma. The difference between them and myself is that I do not take any pleasure in watching other’s suffer or endure difficult times. I have realized the value of having a life outside of corrections because once you leave those doors that is it, if that is all you have. Work cannot and should not be everything. I had been offered many times over my career to be one of the “token females” in a manager’s office up front but in the end I stayed true to myself. I watched what other women went through in these roles, seeing that they were just the face that would communicate the wishes of the good old boy’s club and that if you weren’t willing to be a “yes” person you wouldn’t get very far. I always did believe, and still do, that I made more of a difference on the front line. That just by being myself and treating others with dignity and respect and setting a positive example that I could change the lives of others. I did not make it out of this career unscathed. Working hard to change the environment and make it more positive for all did take its toll on me. I suffered the end of a marriage. I suffered both emotionally and physically to stand up for my beliefs. I sometimes wonder what kind of person I may have turned out to be if I had not chosen to work in corrections or to stay when times got tough. I can now say I believe I am more hardened in my view of life and society than I likely would have been if I would have worked in another field, but seeing the downfall of other’s has

also made me that much more grateful for the things that are good in my life. There were times, though they may have been few and far between, when another staff member would show gratitude for me having helped them in adjusting to the workplace or learn new things. There were times when offenders wrote letters of thanks to me for helping them change their lives, or called the center to let me know they had now graduated with their GED and were living on their own, charge free, for the first time in their lives because I pushed them to take rehabilitative programs. Those are the moments I know I made the right decision to stay and not give up. I believe I am a stronger woman now for it.

Summary

Andrea's story was a compilation of my five participants and my own experiences as women CWs. As all the women were at different places in their careers and came from different backgrounds and generations, the most prevalent commonalities were used in conducting Andrea's background story and journey into the corrections field. The composite narrative of the women's experiences was a way to preserve their confidentiality but also a way in which to reduce redundancy due to the similarity in some of the experiences of the women (Creswell, 2012). The story, in particular Andrea's diary, depicted the themes that were developed from analyzing the interview data and the secondary diary data. The themes and subthemes, along with the personal meanings of the participant's experiences as women CWs, will be examined in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY THEMES

In chapter four I told the story of Andrea, including her journey into corrections and her experiences during her career as a woman CW. Andrea's story was a representation of the data collected during this study and the character of Andrea personified the lives of the participants and my own experiences as a woman CW. Andrea's story presented the prevalent themes that emerged across the data for the different participants. In this chapter I will examine each of the different themes that were presented in more detail and delve into the meaning behind their individual experiences.

Summary

The experiences of women working in the context of men's correctional centers has been conducted in the past primarily from a quantitative stand point, focusing what women are likely to experience compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Farnworth, 1992; Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). In addition, these studies were completed at a time when women were first being integrated to the men's correctional environment, primarily in the 1980s and 1990s. (e.g., Jurik, 1985; Jurik, 1988). By examining the experiences of women CWs from a narrative perspective the goal of the current study was to not only expand our knowledge of the experiences of women CWs at the current time, but also bridge the gap in the literature by providing a qualitative perspective of the experiences of women CWs and describe what those experiences look like in depth.

From the interviews and secondary data (the diaries) I collected from the participants and myself, a number of themes across the data became present: Defying Tradition, The Asset of Women Corrections Workers, Women Surviving and Thriving in the Corrections Environment (including the subthemes of Proving Themselves, Be Professional, Do Your Job, Know Your Job, and Finding Their Strengths and Knowing Their Limitations), Good Old Boy's Club, Dual Identity: Corrections Worker First, Woman Second, Zero Harassment Tolerance? (including the subtheme of Equal Opportunity Harassment), Being Broken Down... (including the subtheme of ...Building Themselves Back Up), and Changes for the Worse? These themes were created in order to answer the research question "what is it like being a woman corrections worker employed in a men's correctional facility?" In discussing these themes, I will present excerpts

from the participant interviews and diary data to exemplify the themes and to provide evidence towards why these particular themes were generated from the data.

Themes and Meaning for Women Working in Men's Corrections

In this section I will examine each of the individual themes generated from the data and how they pertain to the women CWs and the meaning derived from their experiences.

Defying Tradition

A commonality that was present across each of the women's stories was a history of challenging traditional gender roles at certain times during their lives. This commonality to me indicated that it is possible that women from certain backgrounds, and who have grown up to hold certain beliefs about the roles of women in society in general, may be more likely to choose a traditionally male dominated career such as corrections.

Several of the women in the study grew up in a semi-rural or farming type of environment which contributed to their upbringing as strong, hard working women who were not opposed to more traditionally masculine work. Most of the women were not raised with specific gender roles in mind – when a job needed done, it didn't matter what gender they were, the job still had to be done:

I was never raised particularly feminine in that I held those values and felt a need to have a more feminine job. I don't feel I was really pushed in either direction. If I liked something I just did it. I was the oldest and a girl so whenever help was needed it was expected that I would help. It wasn't even so much needing to help but I just wanted to do things along with my dad such as riding the tractors and combining. I think I always have believed that I could do any job I wanted to do.

This did not always mean, however, that the women were given the support to do whatever they wanted to do. Some women's families did not encourage the breaking of gender roles in every aspect of life. The work that needed done on the farm was always there, but for some women it was still expected that they would find more traditional roles in their lives:

It wasn't like, oh that's too heavy for you to lift, oh you shouldn't do that. For the most part, no, you got two arms and two legs, so you did physical work. . . . It certainly wasn't you can grow up and be anything you want to be.

For all of the women, family relationships and dynamics appeared to have a powerful influence on their involvement in more nontraditional activities and in viewing themselves as

capable women. In particular, the women's fathers influenced the undertaking of roles and activities that were more masculine in nature while their mothers held more traditional roles and values in their lives:

[Dad] taught me to stand on my own feet. Anything I wanted to learn, he taught me. I know how to weld, I know how to fix engines, I know how to pick apart a diesel pump and put it back together again. I can fix just about anything. . . . I thank Dad for doing that for me.

Additionally, most of the women were either the oldest of the children, or had predominantly female older siblings, therefore the women were expected to help and learn roles that might have otherwise been fulfilled by a male child:

I've always been a bit of a rebel. . . . my Father really instilled in me that I could do whatever I wanted to do. . . . I was never told that I couldn't do stuff so there wasn't a really clear gender [role]. Well Mom did. . . . They did for themselves, but not for me.

The participant's parents followed traditional gender roles – mom cooked and dad worked – but for the women in the study, the expectations to help led to the blurring of gender roles.

Though the women all had a history of challenging traditional gender roles there appeared to be generational differences between the women participants. The women who were from an older generation were not necessarily raised to believe that women can do anything men can do, but filled nontraditional gender roles out of necessity at times. The younger women in the study were raised believing that as women they could fill the same roles as men.

The Asset of Women Corrections Workers

Though none of the participants grew up with a desire to work in the corrections field, different life circumstances and often benefits to working in corrections drew them into the career path. Once in men's corrections, the women saw themselves as making valuable contributions to the field that contributed to their decision to stay working in the field.

For most of the participants, entering men's corrections came as a result of having related education or work experience. Some participants spoke about how their interest in the social sciences in university led them to develop an interest in criminal behavior and the desire to understand how people become involved in the justice system. For several of the women, experience in the corrections field, or a closely related field, led them to see men's corrections as a viable area of employment:

Corrections had always been an interest for me, however working as a CW had not. The clinical and psychological aspect to working in corrections is really what drew me in. When I graduated . . . in psychology . . . working in corrections as a CW seemed an excellent way to gain some knowledge and experience in the area.

One participant felt that the classes she took drew her to the corrections field. The courses she most enjoyed were the ones she associated with what she thought work in corrections would involve:

A lot of the classes that I . . . found that I really enjoyed were the abnormal psychology, criminology classes and everything like that. Really what it came down to was ‘what can I do as a career that would involve these?’

Some of the women described how their life circumstances led them to what they described as finding themselves in the men’s corrections field after not really planning to be there, “I kind of fell into it. It wasn’t a first choice for sure. Most of the way through training I realized I quite enjoyed it and ended up staying.”

Applying to work at a correctional center came from some of the women’s direct interest in the corrections field:

It just seemed really interesting to me and I think that from my . . . interest in people dealing with the law, it was an interesting field . . . that I wanted to get in to. So I did. Working in corrections was also viewed as a stepping-stone to policing, which was the end goal for some of the participants:

I always . . . wanted to go into police, because that is what I really wanted to do back when I was in high school. So I went in through the [corrections] training . . . that is how I started there. It’s also the interest of the other side [of corrections] too you know. What makes people tick?

One participant described how a government job offered an opportunity for women that was not available in a lot of employment areas at that time. Job security, equal wages, and equal opportunity hiring practices provided an opportunity that would be difficult for a woman turn down:

They have to have so many visible minorities. Well guess what, I was a visible minority, if I knew it or not when I was hired. Those terms weren’t even used. I just came up and grabbed an application form and filled it out. Then they said, ‘okay we’ve got some

people to interview you.’ Then I had an interview instantly. . . . I was filling out forms. I said, ‘this is an oath to the Queen, what’s the deal here? Why I would be giving an oath to the Queen?’ ‘Oh they’ve hired you.’ . . . They had to have so many women, I guess, and they went ‘oh there is one.’

For the women a government job had a lot of desirable qualities. The benefits of getting a government position, a benefits package, and competitive wages made the position appealing to all participants. The CW position was taken by the participants primarily out of necessity and job security. The type of work, although interesting to the women, was not the primary draw of men’s corrections:

The benefits of having a government job . . . well we didn’t have all the benefits [at that time], but you had paid vacation and you probably couldn’t lose a government job. You know, you could stay there for twenty, thirty years. You had a job! You didn’t have to worry about what you were going to do and a lot of jobs for females . . . if you weren’t a nurse or weren’t a teacher, again which were jobs for twenty, thirty years, you know if you are working in the service industry or retail or something like that, it wasn’t as steady or as a secure of job.

Though none of the women had set out to have a career in men’s corrections, once there they all saw the possibility for women to make valuable contributions to the field. The women in the study all felt strongly about the benefits of having women working with male offenders and staff in men’s correctional centers. Each of the women saw value in their particular skills, attitudes, and characteristics in aiding offenders towards their rehabilitative efforts and teaching necessary social skills to aid them in real life situations.

Several of the women saw value in having women as examples of positive role models and examples of women being in authoritative roles. Some of the women spoke about being a role model on how offenders should conduct themselves both in the institution and in the community. Female influence was very valuable and helped normalize social situations. It helped improve the overall attitudes of offenders, balancing out the male dominated authority. The women staff members were often easier to talk to and helped the offenders learn to communicate with women in socially acceptable ways:

Women in corrections have been invaluable. There is lots of things that can go wrong when you mix genders together but lots of things can go wrong when you have one

gender together to. . . . I really felt that I could make a difference, that I could have an effect on someone else, I was not going to change people but people were able to change around me and I could notice that and encourage that.

The women saw challenging male offender's anti-social views of women in the institution as a way to help change their views of women in society in order to better help them become part of their communities:

I looked at it as guys are coming in for a reason. They are being incarcerated for a reason and it's probably something that they've always learned that they can treat women in their lives, their mothers, their girlfriends, their baby mammas, their sisters, like nothing. And they can get away with it. It didn't make me uncomfortable; it kind of made me irritated. I'm like, 'no, this is not okay. I'm not going to tolerate it.'

The women acknowledged that for some of the male offender's, their involvement in the justice system is a direct result of their anti-social views of women in society:

There are a lot of guys that maybe don't have very good interactions with females on the outside. . . . these guys have sexually assaulted women or they have really terrible mothers. Maybe I can be a positive role model for these guys and that's the thing, I try and be really positive and at least decent to these guys to show them that it's not all bad out there. I'm a female . . . see there are authority figures that you can respect . . . there are women that you can respect. . . . You can try and be a positive role model.

Some offenders may also have a maternal view of women CW's which may make them more approachable to male offenders than male CWs. Many of the inmates would open up to the female staff in ways they may not feel comfortable doing with male staff. They felt as though they were able to discuss family or children. Often, the inmates seemed to look for acceptance, or affirmation and positive reinforcement from the female staff – aspects they may not get from the male staff:

A lot of them . . . they never had a mom because, she might have been in jail, or she's never been there. Where I work at, they are always looking up and going, 'Did I do good? Did I do good?' They want that praise, they want that acceptance. I think it is more like I am a mom some days. . . . They want to have that positive enforcement. They want to hear you say 'You did well'. They didn't hear that all the time when they were growing up.

The women in the study all felt that the verbal skills that women bring to the job can benefit the institution in several ways. Some women felt offenders were more likely to confide in women about past life experiences or things that are going on that could interfere with the security of the institution. Opening up about traumatic events and owing up to past mistakes can help offenders work on their issues while incarcerated and can aid in offender rehabilitation:

They'd probably never shared their experience before; I mean you know many of them had been physically and sexually harmed as children. Their whole families had been. . . . For them releasing that poison in their system and for someone to say 'that wasn't right, you didn't do anything to cause that, let's look at some things that you can do to move past that. Or not that you are a dirt bag because you are in custody.' I said 'okay you aren't a bad person because you made a bad choice. . . . Do you want to figure out how to make good choices?'

The women CWs saw value in using skills that are more traditionally feminine such as their verbal skills on the job. They felt that having a level head and deescalating situations before it got to a physical level was an important skill to have on the job. The women saw themselves as able to keep cool in volatile situations. Some women felt that having too many men contributes to a competitive atmosphere, which escalates situations, as neither party is willing to back down. The women saw having a mix of men and women as valuable in order to have a variety of working styles, for all situations, "I think part of it is we could just stop and think and in some ways maybe we are a bit more logical; is there any way we can solve this without resorting to physicality?" The women acknowledged that there are men who will try to use verbal strategies, but there was a belief that women are likely to employ these strategies more readily. The women also suggested that good verbal skills were extremely reliable, especially in the past, when staff did not carry much equipment such as pepper spray and handcuffs. As women are more likely to employ verbal strategies, it is important to have them to help deescalate situations that are potentially physical in nature.

Women Surviving and Thriving in the Corrections Environment

The women in the study shared various strategies for how they have navigated the corrections environment and offered advice for other women entering this field. Subthemes related to women surviving and thriving in men's corrections are - proving themselves, be

professional, do your job, know your job, and finding their strengths and knowing their limitations.

Proving themselves.

The women spoke about feeling that proving themselves was important for all new staff coming in to the institution, but especially for women because of factors such as sexual dynamics and physical capability. Men's corrections was seen as a judgmental environment where one's behavior and capabilities would be judged by other staff and offenders. One participant described how new staff were warned before they had started any shifts in the institution about keeping a low profile and not drawing negative attention to themselves:

At [the jail] you only get one first impression and word travels fast what kind of staff you are. If you are too soft, too flirtatious, not physically capable, or lazy, every one will know within a matter of days. You will have to prove yourself on the job. As a new staff coming in, and especially as a woman, you will be under scrutiny. You will be watched for how you handle yourself on the job.

Proving themselves on the job meant different things for different participants. Older participants, who entered into corrections when women were less commonly employed, felt the pressure to prove themselves came mostly from male staff members:

I knew I'd be working in a men's jail with male staff that had been there for a long time, and some of them that did not want . . . women working there. I knew that . . . before I even started. They really wanted to see where your head was at. Whether you could take, I don't really want to call it abuse, but I guess it really was . . . because you are going to get it from the offenders. How are you going to react? Are you going to [be] solid and strong enough to take it?

For newer staff, the opposite was true: they felt the need to prove themselves more to the male inmates, as much of the male staff were already accepting of women in the CW role.

All of the women CWs also acknowledged a need to prove themselves to male offenders in the institution, specifically in their authority and in their professional integrity. There was a need to prove to the offenders that they were in a position of authority and that they expected to be treated on equal levels to male staff:

I think, definitely being able to address the men on a level that you're feeling as an equal. I'm giving you an order and I expect you to follow it just . . . like I would expect you to

listen to my partner. . . . We need to make sure that we get out there and we do the job and not sit back and let our partners, be it a male or whatever, do the job.

Proving themselves to male offenders also meant proving that they were there to do the job and would not tolerate sexual innuendoes and pick-up attempts:

I can't be backing down to these guys and show a sense of weakness or otherwise I'm going to get eaten alive. . . . When I first started so many of these guys were trying to toe the line and see . . . they were testing me. I dealt with a lot of, 'can I have your phone number?' . . . so I felt like I had to prove myself right off the bat.

Be professional, do your job, know your job.

The participants saw an importance in themselves projecting a professional image in their work as women CWs. One of the areas that the women spoke about was projecting professional boundaries in their interactions with male inmates and other staff members. The women spoke about how it is possible to interact with male offenders in a joking and kind manner but that women have to be careful to clearly communicate where their professional boundaries are to other staff, male offenders, and themselves:

It is going to come with the territory because it is kind of previously a man's job. I joke around with the staff, both men and women. I joke around with inmates, but to me there is that line you just don't cross.

The women felt clear professional boundaries can make it so their professional integrity is not questioned by other staff or male offenders:

The best advice is to project professionalism in presenting yourself and in your interactions with staff and offenders. If you don't give them anything to work with it will be more difficult for both staff and offenders to find an area to judge or exploit.

Several of the women spoke about the physical presentation of women CWs as being important to how they were viewed on the job. The women felt that when they came in to the institution emphasizing feminine characteristics such as wearing heavy make-up or large amounts of jewelry, that they are taken less seriously as CWs by staff of both genders. The women felt that drawing to one's femininity made them more susceptible to being judged on the job in a negative manner, whether it is as less physically capable or as being seen as possibly drawing the attention of male staff and offenders. The women saw a benefit in coming into men's corrections as a CW first and as a woman second:

I mean when you come to work wearing pigtails, really? What are you expecting from the guys when you are coming to work looking like a little girl? We had a manager who started at the jail . . . she had up to three buttons undone on her shirt . . . I wanted to stop her and say, 'Hey, do up your buttons. You're in management.' I didn't feel comfortable in being able to do that. . . . I think we have to, as women, know where we work and respect that fact that we are women, okay, and we are going to be sexualized. It doesn't matter we're women, but the more professional we can present ourselves the less hassle we are going to have to deal with. . . . I know I have in the past with new staff . . . said before make sure you dress appropriately don't make it any harder on you, or your female co-workers. Be professional, and do your job. Know your job.

The women emphasized that they are the professionals in their interactions with the offenders. They believed that earning the respect of their coworkers and the offenders meant acting with professionalism, not expecting or demanding respect because they wear the uniform. They felt that respect was earned through their handling situations appropriately and professionally. When new staff members enter the facility demanding respect, they can have issues adapting on the job, which could place them in dangerous situations:

I think physically a lot of the girls are a lot more fragile and I see many of them think if they talk tough, if they talk rough or if they . . . scream at people to get them to [comply], they think those little epilates on their military type uniform is going to allow them to be in charge. It is a real mistake. You have to earn respect. You are not given it just because you are wearing that outfit.

Finding their strengths and knowing their limitations.

The women spoke of feeling that it is important to have an awareness of your capabilities and areas of strengths and limitations while working in men's corrections. The women's views varied some on this topic. From what I inferred from the participants on this area it seems possible that generational differences could have had an affect on how they viewed their abilities. For the younger women in the study, they came into corrections at a time when women were more prevalent in men's correctional centers. They were also born into a generation where equality between men and women was emphasized and previously fought for in society. These women reported not having given much thought to the physical capabilities required in the job or their abilities to complete the job successfully:

Knowing that I have a background in some of those more hyper masculine [activities], I was never worried about myself physically. . . We're in the 21st Century, there should be no issues whether I am male or female, it's just about how I do my job. Can I do this job? The answer is yes, so there shouldn't be any problems as far as I'm concerned. . . . I'm aware that there were a lot of issues and I'm glad that I didn't have to face any of them because it's bullshit. I can do this job just as well as any male staff can.

Despite having a view of women as being equally capable of working as a CW in a men's correctional center the women felt that overconfidence was dangerous to have, and that women still need to be aware of their strengths. Having too confident of an attitude was viewed negatively by the women and they felt that because some women feel they need to prove themselves physically they can be drawn into overcompensating on the job, "Maybe that explains some of the ones that are more heat scores, they . . . really are trying to best improve themselves and . . . they are overcompensating." The women felt that very little of the CW role is actually based on one's physical capability in that the majority of the job revolves around maintaining the security of the institution, supervising offenders, and writing reports and paperwork. Older participants especially felt that it was foolish for women to assume that they can handle all physical situations or go out of their way to engage in these situations rather than trying to deescalate hostile situations:

The clientele that we deal with will smack a woman in the face the same, as they will a guy. . . . You have to recognize that . . . you have to be cognitive of that. It is a dangerous situation that you don't want to be put in. . . . When you walk through the sally port doors you are putting yourself into an environment that any given day you could be physically assaulted. Now do I dwell on that? No. But do I do everything within my power to try and avoid that? Yes. Do I make [sure] doors are secure? Yes. . . . Do I search things so there [are] not drugs brought in to alter peoples mind? Yes. Do I, if there is a legitimate request . . . attempt to the best of my ability . . . see that [it] is fulfilled? Yes. Do I go out of my way to do favors? No.

The women saw a need to understand the potential danger of working in a men's correctional center and not take their safety for granted. They felt that working on themselves to become the most capable they could be, and always being conscious of their physical strengths and limitations, were the best ways to improve themselves in the corrections environment. Some

of the women identified physical improvements, such as going to the gym or fitness classes, as important self-improvement exercises. Some of the women were concerned about physical altercations with men that were bigger or stronger, and therefore believed that improving their physical condition was a very important aspect of the job:

Every day I walk in that place . . . I know there is a possibility that I may not come out. . . . I try not to think of it that way because . . . you can't let fear overrule your life, but fear is definitely a good thing to have.

The women spoke of having an understanding of their capabilities and that all staff have skills to offer and a place in the functioning of the institution. Knowing your capabilities and your limits and working within them was not seen as being a less capable staff member but rather as a person who has a realistic understanding of both the environment and themselves:

I am not a female that believes I can do whatever a male can. That's not what I feel. I know that my muscle mass is different than a man's. When it comes down to it, and somebody needs to be taken down, I wouldn't be the one taking him down because there is no way, even if he is a smaller guy than me, his muscle is different. I have lower body muscle, not upper body muscle, whereas guys have upper body muscle. Right? Knowing that I can use my head to keep from getting to that point is what I have trust in, but when it comes to having to be taken down. . . . I know that there is going to be somebody behind me to do that. I can definitely help, but I am not going to be the one taking this guy down. I know that.

They felt that having a realistic understanding of their capabilities helped them find their place within the institution. Even if the women did not necessarily feel they could handle every physical situation they were presented with they were confident in the use of other skills and the ability to assist in physical situations.

Good Old Boy's Club

All of the women in this study noted some degree of disparity in the treatment of women staff compared to male staff, during at least one point in their career. This disparity appeared to be less pronounced in current times but the more senior women readily pointed out that men's corrections still is, and may always be, a good old boys club. As the experiences of the younger participants suggested, the corrections environment has seen improvements in the treatment of

women, as they had quite different experiences when they entered into corrections than the participants who came before.

The experiences of the women in this study differed in some respect to where they felt the most resistance to working in men's corrections. The more senior women in the study spoke about experiencing more difficulties regarding working with male staff than the offenders. The opposite was true for the younger staff. They noted more issues with male inmates than with male staff. During the interviews, the younger participants discussed experiences where they found some members of both genders to be equally as nurturing. The younger participants described their experiences with male staff as mostly positive. They believed this to be a quality of younger generations, in that women are not fighting as much for equality as they used to. They thought the negative attention they received mostly came from the offenders:

I am not a trailblazing woman who is among a few women at [the jail]. There are still a few men with the 'women don't belong here' mentality but I think that has a lot to do with the generation they were raised in. . . . Male inmates have been more of a challenge for me.

This did not mean, however, that all interactions with male staff were positive, as some of the participants described occasional situations where they were assigned less desirable assignments, and they felt this was because of their gender. They discussed situations where newer male staff, with less experience than themselves, had been given more desirable positions than the female staff that had been there longer. There was an overall belief among the participants that placing men, even new and less experienced male staff, in positions where they get the most experience in physical training contributes to the idea that women are less physically capable. This also resulted in training being forgotten, as the female staff that do not get the physical positions do not get to use the skills they learned in training. One of the participants discussed that seven years had passed between her initial training and receiving any form of refresher on restraint and compliance that could be used in a potentially violent situation, "When you don't use these skills, you lose them, so expecting that I would be able to remember anything from training I had for one week . . . would be unlikely." This can cause greater issues during future assignments, as the female staff may not be as capable of responding in a physical situation due to not having the experience:

It does almost set us up for failure. For sure, that's the thing, you don't use it you lose it. Absolutely. When it comes down to all the stuff . . . we learned in restraint training, I have never used most [of] that. Even once.

For the older generation of participants, their experiences entering into corrections were very different. The majority of the difficulties in establishing themselves came from male staff. They described being treated like women were not welcome. They also felt that society had not come far enough in the equitable treatment of women in general and corrections as a whole. They were unwanted in this role, and they were told that from the start. They explained how they felt restricted in the areas they were allowed to work, and it took fifteen years for that to change:

That really was a good old boys club. . . . I think somewhere along the lines in the psyche of the universe there is still a little bit of men rule and women drool. It doesn't matter what business you go into. . . . That mentality is certainly going to filter down even further from the business world to custody because women predominately didn't go to jail. You know, they do now, but [still]. Still a lot less than men. That whole universal imbalance in that regard, it is still there.

The moving of staff around the institution was very limited in the past. The view was that women were social workers and belonged in the low security areas where casework would be done. They discussed trying to break barriers and earn respect for women beyond the idea that women are just "arousing these guys." This included setting examples with the male staff, including supervisors, on appropriate treatment of women:

You don't speak to me that way. Would you like a man to speak to your wife that way in her workplace, or your daughter? I am somebody's wife and I am somebody's daughter. I don't expect to be spoken to that way.

The older generation of participants felt that the good old boy's club is still present and strong in men's corrections, and in society in general. Women need to do as they are told even if it goes against their personal beliefs. They suggested this mentality exists in management as well. Some women were viewed as having management jobs based on their skill, but also because they do what they are told to do. They recalled experiences where a female manager was told to do something she knew was wrong but did it anyway to keep her job. These women believed this existed in all facets of corrections, not just among the CWs:

I think that the perception is that we are moving forward. And I mean perception. I don't think we are at all. . . . If you are not a 'yes' woman you're not going anywhere in there. In our institution if you do not say yes to whatever they tell you to do you are black listed and they don't want you to be working in an area. . . . It is that we are women in a workforce that pretends that we are equal and we are not still.

Even though the participants believed that the good old boys club still exists, they believe it is not as obvious in its presence as it was previously. The participants felt there was a grooming process in place for men who are part of the good old boys club. They recalled seeing instances where work positions were created in order to give a man who did not have the necessary qualifications an opportunity to gain experience in order to advance. The participants did not see this same grooming process for women, and believed that token women were put in specific places for tidying and organizing, and getting the position ready for a man. They did not believe these token women even realized they were being used, nor did they realize they could never be part of the club.

Though the good old boy's club continues to be an issue women must face in men's correctional facilities, some of the participants pointed out that there are a lot of accepting male staff who are more than willing to work along with women and do not support the discrimination of their fellow CWs. One participant told of a senior male staff that helped her find her place in corrections when she first started:

[He] encouraged me to make sure that if that happened I voiced my own opinion. He said, 'you work here, you're an employee here . . . we all get paid, we all work together.

Never ever ever allow someone to run you over in here.' I kind of took that to heart. All of the women have had positive experiences with male staff, and suggested that it is often the actions of a few people, and some key units, that can perpetuate negative interactions between staff.

Dual Identity: Corrections Worker First, Woman Second

The women in the study felt that being a woman in men's corrections contributed to them experiencing unique challenges that were not shared by their male peers. Though the women viewed themselves on the job as professional CWs first and women second, they did not always feel they were treated that way.

Some of the things the participants disliked about the job the most had to do with the fact that they are women. Being sexualized in a correctional environment is an issue specific to women, and they often felt jealous of male co-workers for not having to deal with that dynamic, “I think being sexualized and being called sexually based names has been my biggest challenge. Inappropriate actions and statements from offenders have always been difficult to handle.” Some of the women viewed their dual identities in terms of the professional role coming first, “I don’t think women are sex objects. I think they are human beings. . . . I was a human being and I was a corrections worker and I was a female after that.” They felt frustrations over being sexualized in the workplace and navigating their dual identities. They expressed a desire to be viewed as a CW first:

I understand that they are always going to see . . . that I am a woman, but when it comes to the inmates, I just want them to see the uniform and not necessarily the gender behind it. . . . I’m not some object for their entertainment. That’s not what I am there for. I am there as a professional to do a job.

Some felt that because they put effort into not allowing themselves to be sexualized on the job, they made an effort in their personal lives to do activities that are more feminine, so they can express their identities as women that they suppress at work:

I still want to do some things that make me feel attractive as a woman because obviously I am not going to do anything in my work life that generally is going to do that but I don’t want to become that desexualized, I don’t want to become a desexualized object 100%. Yes, I am good with being desexualized at work, not being thought of as an object but when I am out of work I still want to feel like I’m attractive. I want to be able to feel like a sexual being.

Often, the women felt that the comments offenders would make seemed more personalized to their appearance or looks, where as comments towards male staff were more general in nature:

[I got] lots of catcalls and whistles or other times really demeaning comments on [my] weight or looks. I don’t think men experience this like women do. Behaviors towards men seem to be more of a challenge of their strength or intelligence; it does not seem personalized like it is to the women.

Another challenge specific only to women that many spoke about was the feeling of being judged as a group when the inappropriate or negative actions of one woman would extend to how the rest of the women were treated or viewed around the center. They felt that one woman's actions led to all women being judged, which would always raise the question of women working in a men's institution. One participant described the atmosphere after a woman was let go for being sexually involved with an offender as being like a witch-hunt. "It was males against females and the guys were looking . . . and saying 'are you fucking an inmate?' I don't know, who is next? It was a big witch hunt." Some felt that because there is the possibility for a sexual aspect when you have the two genders working with each other, women's behaviors towards offenders will always be more scrutinized and staff will watch for inappropriate behaviors. They had difficulty navigating the dual identity of being a woman and a CW, and felt that it is an unfortunate fact of being a woman CW that you do not just have to prove you can do the job; you had to prove you are not going to be susceptible to the attention of male offenders. They felt like they needed to prove they were just there to do a job:

I feel like that's one of the things that I need to do to prove that I'm just there for the job, and it is kind of sad that the fact that I'm competent at my job isn't enough anymore.

Unfortunately, that's still one of the things that I am aware of as a female there; it's just like making sure that the staff too know.

There was a feeling of an existing double standard for women; praise for job excellence was directed at the individual, while judgment for individual misconduct was directed at the group as a whole:

If a woman does something spectacular at work that behavior does not extend to the other women around the institution but if a woman messes up, especially by getting intimately involved with an offender, all women's behaviors are scrutinized. Especially when it's a staff no one really expected I think it really shakes the foundation of the institution and everyone wonders who may be next. Being judged as a group and being at risk for intimate relationships is something that I think women have to struggle with and always will. When it happens I think all women feel like here we go again, having to defend ourselves and have our behaviors scrutinized.

Interestingly, the women feeling judged as a group when an inappropriate action takes place is not a phenomenon men experience when a male staff's conduct is called into question. One

participant questioned the double standard, wondering why men are not judged as harshly as a group when they act inappropriately on the job:

Unfortunately there have been circumstances that females in the center have been persuaded to blur the lines between their professional lines and their social. Men have done it too, but it is just hidden over a lot better. I know that has happened. . . . Whenever it comes between the male and the female, the women are really just crushed by their co-workers and the other females that work there and the other male staff that work there and it goes right back to the 1980's and women shouldn't work in corrections.

She also felt that both the public and those employed in corrections are fascinated with evidence that points to women not being suitable to working men's correctional centers. She felt that indiscretions of women staff are frequently published in the media and the offending staff's name is spread around in the centers. If a man has an indiscretion or is not doing his job properly, other staff will rarely find out who the individual is:

There have been cases where well, our whole reporting for duty is because of what a male staff did. . . . Getting two on night shift is because a male staff went in and had sexual intercourse with a male offender many years ago. Not a female staff, a male staff. Was that in the newspaper? It doesn't hit the media but if it is a female it is all over the front page. We as corrections officers don't stand up and say wait; let's see what the verdict is. . . . I don't know why we are so willing to throw women under the bus. When one of them falls we eat them. That's horrible. It's not the same with the men. We've all complained that we have to check in and check out but is anybody writing hate mail to the [male] staff that caused that? Had it been a female you would have known about it and you would have known her name.

The participants recognized that women may be more likely to carry emotional stress and traditional gender duties than their male co-workers, and that this can make women more vulnerable or in the position to make mistakes. They felt women should protect other women from falling prey to offenders during vulnerable times in their lives:

Don't undermine anybody but particularly . . . if you see a female who has maybe had a difficulty. Maybe you know her, and maybe she's had a marital breakdown or maybe she has had a difficulty or maybe she has lost a child or whatever the case may be, maybe she is grieving and she is at her lowest, protect her. She's wounded . . . She is having a

difficulty that you may have in your life at some point in time. Be there to support her. Direct her, guide her, care for her. The inmates get to see that. They see when someone is vulnerable. That is when they attack. . . . When they get knocked off their foundation, don't leave them to the pack of wolves because the pack of wolves are waiting for that . . . For someone to share a cigarette and when you are at your weakest, someone gives you a compliment. . . . You see if you have brought stuff and you are trying to perk yourself up and you bring it into the workplace, they are going to say, 'oh why is she needing that? What is going on in her real life?'

The women felt there are times women need to shut down their emotional sides in order to do what is necessary on the job:

First of all you have to [have] that emotional click-off, yah, this is a job that I have. . . . I have to desensitize myself and become non-human . . . I can't feel things. I can't feel things that I see [such as] taking them in for visits to see their family and when they are dying, you feel like hell.

Some of the women touched on a well-documented phenomenon known as the second shift (Hochschild, 1989). After working full time, women are more likely than men to be required to fulfill the home duties such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. They felt women are susceptible to more pressure from having to work within the home:

We are expected to do more, you are expected to go home after eight hours, or sixteen hours and cook clean and do everything else. You are a Mom, you are a guard, you are a nurse, you are a doctor, you are a psychologist, and you are a taxi driver. You got a lot of roles to fill. There are also men that do the whole thing too. . . . Some people just don't know how to handle it.

Another challenge that is specific to women in men's correctional facilities is the need to work with offender's who have a great disrespect for women both in their views of women in society and with women in positions of authority. Male offenders are sometimes less perceptive to the authority of women staff than they are with male staff. Sometimes this can make the job more difficult for women:

We're working with men on the other side of the bars that have very little respect for women and don't feel that they should be [there]. . . . I know for sure I've dealt with guys on the unit that are not going to take direction from a woman no matter what. They

have no respect for me whatsoever, as a woman. Whereas a man can walk in there and say the same thing and they are jumping to it.

Another issue that was unique to women CWs was judgment and assumptions made around women receiving promotional opportunities. Throughout their careers, the participants observed instances where women that were promoted were judged as not having earned the position compared to men receiving similar opportunities:

They don't question when a man gets promoted but they question when a woman gets promoted. . . . There is all this undermining but there is never any talk in that rumor mill when it has to do with men bumping other men out of jobs or a position being made for a man to bump into a position.

Zero Harassment Tolerance?

A common theme amongst the women was the feeling that they were working in an environment where harassment was condoned. When some of the women started in men's corrections there was no formal policy on harassment and bullying. Though now there is a formal code of conduct for all staff to follow, some of the women felt that management poorly dealt with harassment, and seeking help for harassment made issues worse for the victim. Additionally, the women mentioned a phenomenon, which I have termed as equal opportunity harassment, which will be discussed as a subtheme.

The women described some of the harassing behaviors they encountered over their careers. One participant talked about being the victim of sexually obscene phone calls in the night to her home phone number that were so frequent she eventually had no choice but to change her phone number and have her number unlisted. There was another situation described where a male supervisor had made a sexual comment to a woman in front of offenders. The worker asked the manager to not talk in that manner, as sexualizing her in front of the offenders diminishes her authority. The consequences that resulted from the worker sticking up for herself included increased harassment, and comments that suggested the supervisor believed it was his right to talk to her in any manner he wished. Rumors were started, involving the female staff bringing drugs and other contraband into the center. She genuinely believed this was an attempt to sabotage her, and remove her from her position. These rumors perpetuated more rumors, and she felt she had no support from any of the staff:

I had male staff spitting on me because [they believed] . . . that I was also having sexual relations with an offender on duty. . . . That wasn't happening either. I am a very monogamous person and I was married. Those things are very sacred to me. These things were sort of thrown out. Some picked up on [it], I got a lot more disgusting phone calls. There was no support from her fellow staff members, nor were there any steps by management to stop the bullying and harassment she was experiencing. In fact a lot of the harassment originated from the manager who she confronted about his behavior and the friends he had in the upper echelons of the organization. As the harassment of women was so normalized back then, she felt there was no option but to try to recover from it and persevere in corrections.

The women described how the corrections environment is still full of tolerance for bullying and harassing behaviors, and that they would not wish the types of behaviors that they endured to be experienced by anyone else:

My concern is that it's really sliding downhill. I see things now that just, I don't agree with. . . . Lots of people don't see it coming . . . there are speeding trains coming at their heads and I don't think they see it coming and even if I tried to explain it to them they wouldn't believe me. They would think I was undermining. . . . I just hope they have the strength to endure it because it can actually crush people.

Some of the harassment experienced by the women bordered on being life threatening. When one woman tried to report instances of harassment the staff involved alluded to taking a longer time to respond to her assistance should she be in a violent encounter with an offender. In corrections there is a reliance on the response of fellow CWs for one's safety and protection in a dangerous and volatile environment. The staff involved in the bullying behaviors also implied that because the woman was working in a corrections facility that she should expect and tolerate the behaviors she was experiencing, " 'I said what if your wife was treated like this?' 'Well my wife doesn't work in an institution like this.' "

The women often felt that not only did senior management set a poor example for other employees about not being involved in harassment; they are often involved in it themselves. One woman told of a time that numerous managers were watching the security footage of another manager and making fun of him. She said, "They want all of us not to harass, to be appropriate, and yet they are doing that." She talked about how certain units in the center can be hubs for harassment and bullying behaviors of other staff. She felt that management ignores the negative

attitudes that develop in these areas and felt staff should be rotated out of the area more readily in order to deter the development of these behaviors:

It is disgusting. Disgusting behavior by a bunch of little boys that have barely any time in [and] think they know it all. . . . There is no way that upfront does not know that it is a problem area and why they would not move them out of there is shocking to me. It certainly changes people and not for the better. I'm not sure why that is or if it's just they need to move people out of there.

All of the participants believed there was minimal support for women experiencing harassment and bullying. When women have sought out help for harassment their experiences have not been handled appropriately. The general feeling that management leaves with the harassment victims is one of harassment acceptance. They were told, "If they couldn't play with the big boys . . . get out."

While some of the women have identified extremely negative experiences with male staff, other women suggest that harassment is worse from the offenders. Even though the emphasis of incarceration is so offenders can work on their criminogenic needs, such as their views and treatment of women in society, their negative behavior and harassment of women CWs is tolerated in the center. This sends the message to offenders that their behavior is accepted and will be tolerated. These women have expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of support in dealing with harassment from the offenders:

Only once was I given support in that, that particular boss viewed harassment and sexualized harassment against staff as a security concern as it diminishes the authority of staff in front of other offenders. He urged me to confront the situation head on and deal with it. . . . Other supervisors would just imply you need to grow a thicker skin or get over it, as you need to expect a certain amount of harassment and behaviors in a jail. In the end I felt I had no choice but to adjust myself instead of my environment.

Equal opportunity harassment.

The participants described a shift in what has been documented in the past around harassment in men's correctional centers. In the past women CWs were subjected to harassing behaviors at the hands of their male co-workers, male supervisors, and male offenders (Hemmens et al., 2002; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). According to the women in the study the dynamics of harassment and bullying behaviors have changed in that now women are greatly

involved in harassing behaviors and some male staff are subjected to harassment on equal parity with women CWs.

The participants described women CWs as being vindictive to each other. One described that often women talk about other women behind their backs, and engage in back stabbing behavior:

You will find the most vindictive people are actually the females. They . . . purposely try to find ways to see . . . what button they can push, and they do it to other females too.

You just sit back and you watch it and you can see who is pushing what button. . . . Then the next moment you hear they are just sitting there bad mouthing. . . . Don't think the inmates are the only ones that are talking about you.

The women noticed a shift in the types of harassment taking place in corrections. They felt that there is a culture of tolerating harassment, and that some areas of the institution condone this behavior more than others. The harassment situations referred to also involved women harassing other women:

The culture of our center seems to encourage and reward this type of behavior in some areas. Both of these [instances] included female staff harassing and bullying another female staff with male staff in the background cheering them on or supporting them.

Some women felt that after everything women went through to establish themselves in corrections, they are too quick to turn on each other and engage in harassing behaviors. The women believed that many women are trying to be part of the good old boy's club and as a result they are willing to engage in the harassment of other women in an effort to fit in:

Don't try to be something that you are not. You can't fit in. You can think you are going to but then they turn rank, or they walk into a urinal and they all can pee standing up and you can't. You won't fit in at one point in time. Just stop throwing people under buses . . . one day, that bus might be headed for you. . . . When it is, justifiable or not, it's a terrible, terrible place for you to be. Not all people survive it. . . . Don't hold someone to a higher set of standards than you hold yourself. Women have to be very aware that when you have male co-workers that will want to sleep with you, and will if you let them. Male offenders that will do the same and discredit you. The girls need to stand up for the girls.

The women cautioned others about getting caught up in the politics and harassment. They spoke about women that want to be part of the good old boy's club, warning them they never will be. They believed the women who are caught up in that milieu are tolerated and "strung along" by the men for the sake of entertainment, but one day those women will be discarded, or worse:

You get to be passed around amongst them and you get to be a pretend bro, and you are not a bro, between your legs you are not a bro. I am really sorry but . . . at some point you are going to see it and you are going to be devastated by how they turn on you. That is really disgusting and it is the behavior we all deal with here. It's not everybody either. It's just a small group of people.

While it seems that the male CWs are immune to harassment, the women suggested that they are susceptible to harassment the same as many of the women. Demeaning things had been written about staff of both genders and posted around the center, including areas that managers would be present, and no one took them down or tried to track down the employees responsible for the harassing behaviors. One woman said, "I've taken posters down in the main building that had 'rapist' written across them. People treated me badly because I am standing up for what is right." Men have been heard referring to other men as "fags," women have been heard referring to other women as "sluts." Several male staff that the women had considered friends changed their relationship with the participants because they did not want to deal with being harassed by other men about it being a sexual relationship. A male staff came to one participant and apologized for being involved in harassing behaviors towards her but said that he was too afraid to stand up to the men in the group:

He goes 'I don't want to participate in it. I don't, but if I say anything to them they will hunt me down and kill me.' I said 'Really?' He's like, 'Oh yeah. They will make my life miserable.' He goes 'I don't mean for your life to be miserable . . . I'm really sorry that I've been treating you badly here. They were really putting lots of pressure on me.'

The participants described how even men who would be considered part of the good old boy's club are not able to avoid being targeted by the group as a whole. Some of these men experienced this harassment for talking to any women in the center, and that even though they belonged to the old boys club, it didn't matter – harassment was an equal opportunity for all of the staff and nobody was immune.

One participant suggested that some of the men get harassed as much as some of the women. She talked about a situation where a male staff had a bad breakup with a woman staff at the center. The woman - the male staff's ex - had started to spread rumors about him around the center:

That's how the nickname started. Not from the men, but from a woman. At least for some part . . . there are a couple of guys there that 'we're not going to do this.' I am just picking on guys it sounds like but many of the women participate just as much as the guys do. If not more sometimes.

Being Broken Down...

The women reported that being women CWs has shaped who they are as people, their outlooks on themselves as women, and in their lives. The job had also impacted some of the women in devastating ways, such as contributing to mental and physical health issues as well as negatively affecting their personal relationships. The women had described the various ways they have coped with the personal effects of working as a woman in men's corrections. This is discussed in the subtheme, ...building themselves back up.

Working in corrections had adverse affects on the marriages of some of the participants. One woman discussed the role she felt that working in corrections had on her marriage, specifically how her spouse was never able to fully understand her job and the stress she was going through on account of it. Due to not understanding the stress associated with her job, her husband was not able to support her in the way she needed during times of great stress:

[I was] almost assaulted . . . and I took time off. He's like 'I can't believe that, get over it.' I said 'You don't understand what we go through' and he didn't. That is part of the problem right? That was really not the be all and end all of us separating but it had some basis.

Even though some women did not experience the end of a relationship during their careers, they attributed much of the stress with their significant others to their work. They believed that this stress was due in large part to the fact that their partners did not understand the difficulties the women were having:

My partner would get upset with me as he did not understand how greatly dealing with comments and behaviours would affect me or why I would let it affect me the way it did.

To an extent it caused some strain in our personal relationship as I think he just did not get it. I don't think people who do not work in that environment can understand it fully.

Several of the women attributed working in corrections as the source of emotional distress and mental health effects that they were experiencing. One woman was greatly affected by feeling like her co-workers, including ones who were previously her friends, ostracized her:

While all this stuff was going on I had a number of staff members quit talking to me. . . . He's like, 'I can't have you talk to me in the institution like we are friends anymore so if you could just treat me in a professional manner here we can still be friends outside the institution.'

Dealing with this tremendous amount of stress over harassment at work affected them in so serious a manner that they were almost crushed – in some cases, some of the women even contemplated suicide. If they were not as strong of individuals, they do not believe they would have been able to endure:

In dealing with the staff they almost broke me. My co-workers almost broke me. Not the offenders. My co-workers almost broke me. I don't think that if I was not a strong person that I would be working there anymore. I think that you have to really have that self-worth and really know yourself as a person to start there, and to continue a career there.

Through the struggles that these women endured in establishing themselves in corrections, they hoped to have made the path better for new women coming into the field:

Through [my experience], hopefully women working . . . in a predominant male environment, will [benefit]. You just have to kind of pay it forward. . . . People talk about *Mad Men* . . . and how they pat them on the bum and get the coffee and stuff like that. I worked in that environment. Not so much in corrections. That was my upbringing, the little woman at work, it was very uneven. I didn't think that way and I didn't think corrections should be that way and I fought real hard so it wasn't that way for me. Has it taken a pound of flesh? Yah . . . I'm still there and still doing my job . . . Still having an impact. Some of the people that attempted with great force to undermine me are not. . . . I'm saddened to hear that some of them have not done well . . . I certainly don't want that for them but [I] didn't start the game.

Some of the anxiety and stress from the job affected the women when they were away from work. The stress of going back to work caused what some of the women described as panic

attacks, ruining their time off. They had a difficult time coping with the harassment of offenders, and felt these issues came home with them at the end of the day, “I ended up in tears over not knowing how to cope and I didn’t know if I could go back . . . I would start to get anxiety about certain situations at work.” The diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), due to witnessing extremely traumatic events during work, was a significant hurdle for some of the women to overcome. These traumatic events made it really hard for the women to not bring their work lives home with them, and some recognized that PTSD might affect them for the rest of their lives. The mental health effects of working in corrections have followed them home at the end of the day, and continue to follow them through their career, and through relationship changes.

Even with all of the negative experiences these women have encountered, they were still able to look back on their careers with positivity. All of the women found positive comments about their experiences, and all of them were able to reflect back and believe they had made positive changes in their world, and they hoped, in the field of corrections. For some, they believed that working in corrections has made them more grateful and fortunate for the things they have in their own lives:

When I look back at that I’m very . . . thankful that I haven’t had the upbringing that many of the offenders have had. Very thankful. Also very thankful that I haven’t become like some of the people that I work with have become.

Working in corrections allowed each participant to grow as a person, and expand her skills in areas previously considered shortcomings:

Being able to gain skills from my job that I can apply in real life. . . . I’m not very good with confrontation and so being able to develop and become better at it, it’s good because . . . to me it was never positive to be a person that would shy away from confrontation, sometimes there are things you just have to deal with, no matter how much it sucks you just have to do it. I think this job has helped me to develop that so in some ways it has really helped me grow as a person. [I’m] certainly a lot tougher emotionally than maybe I thought I was when I started. I’m certainly grateful for the way it has helped me grow, as a person in dealing with some of the areas that I considered were more of my weakness.

...Building themselves back up.

The women in the study described different ways they were able to cope with the effects of working as women in corrections. They felt that it is important to have a life and activities outside of the institution in order to cope with the stress of working in the corrections environment:

You've got to have that . . . something about you that keeps you stable . . . something else outside the workplace. Work should not be your entire life. You shouldn't go there thinking you are going to make your best friends with your co-workers. You need to have other friends outside of your workplace. Other activities. It can be really mentally detrimental.

One woman described how her personal faith allowed her to endure and cope with the harassment experienced on the job. She felt her faith allowed her not to become compromised or jaded as a person as a result of her negative experiences on the job:

At some point in your life there is accounting for how you have been as a human being. I value knowing that. It keeps you having a work ethic; it keeps you fighting for injustices. It keeps you enduring things that might not be fair. Nobody said life was going to be fair. When I signed on for corrections it did not say, gee you are a young attractive woman and you are going to be treated with dignity and respect. It didn't say that. I thought I was going to be. That was my thing.

Some of the women described using humor as a way to cope with working in what can be a very mentally demanding environment, "I mean obviously we can joke about things that are probably really inappropriate at work . . . for the most part. . . . You kind of have to joke about those dark things in order to get through."

One woman felt that working in corrections has caused her to withdraw socially in that she has to force herself to interact with friends and her community in order to keep herself human:

People don't get it, you change your friends. Even your neighbors. I find myself as a hermit. I shut myself indoors. When I am done at the end, I get myself out doing things . . . I force myself to be human. That's what I think you have to learn how to be, so that you don't become hardened.

She has been able to cope with working in corrections by accepting herself for who she is and knowing the type of person she is whether other individuals recognize it or not:

I put up with a very abusive ex-husband, so the whole thing is, I just learned how to deal with it, the mental abuse. I survived it . . . I learned how to go, it's just a name. It's not what I am. . . . I can look in that mirror and go I am a damn good person. You've got to have a really good self-esteem. . . . I know that I have a good strong ethics. I know that I can stand behind my word. I know who I am. I know where I came from. If you can . . . you can look at yourself in the mirror and be truthful about that, that's a first step. That's how you can be able to survive in a society such as ours.

Changes for the Worse?

While the women in this study had varied opinions on some topics, my research has shown one area where all of the women had similar beliefs: they all experienced frustrations with the bureaucracy of corrections. Some of the women also felt that while there have been positive changes to corrections, not all of the changes and decisions that have occurred have been for the betterment of staff and offenders.

The women saw the decision to decrease staffing levels on shift as a detriment to the functioning of the center, "They actually cut staff and increased offenders. . . . It was originally built for 130 and that was maxed out, we didn't have people sleeping in the gym."

The women felt in the past there was better communication and more effort was placed on recognizing the people who were behind the CW uniform:

Senior managers came out and sat down and had supper with you and talked to you and you know. . . . I don't know where that communication has broken down . . . and it wasn't that I was involved in many things . . . there was fewer staff of course but they visited more often but they took the time to get to know people. They didn't just know me because I was a loud mouth token female, you know, they knew other people too . . . it seemed like they took an interest and that interest is waning. That interest in our job, I see really viable human beings coming to work there that could really have an impact and really add to the community that they are working in and take away something for themselves too. I just see them shriveling up. They just get that bitter and twisted . . . and they didn't used to . . . and there is not the same training process. We're not taught what

our job is and how to do it and to get any value out of it. We're just, well, you're a corrections worker so you're here.

Some of the changes began to make the women feel as though the workplace had become management versus staff, when it used to be that management worked with the staff towards the successful functioning of the center:

You have to cover your own butt because they aren't going to do it for you. They'd rather throw you under the bus than stand in front of you. I come from a time when the boss used to stand in front of you and say, 'No this is not how it is being done. This is the right way.'

They also felt that staff and the center as a whole would benefit from supporting staff members, instead of leaving staff to cope with issues on their own and waiting until it might be too late to help some one:

As staff there we don't have any yearly anti-bullying stuff going on. We don't have a mandatory going to see a counsellor, which we should. Every single staff should. It should be mandatory that they go see a counsellor for two hours a year, or whatever it may be. Just to have that opportunity to say . . . what is going on. If they need more, then they should be able to get more. We don't have any of that. We don't have managers that are willing to stand up for staff either like they used to . . . its just such a different workplace. That's where I think some of the stuff comes from. Managers are not willing to stand up for staff. They are seeing stuff and they are letting it go because they don't want to be involved.

The women spoke about how staff are left to fend for themselves, and that corrections is operating in a state where staff are in constant fear of losing their jobs:

It's in the firings, the recent firings that we've had is all part of that too. Really, what they want is accountability . . . they are using these people as examples. . . . what they were doing was making examples and these people just happened to fall in to [it] . . . the time when they were looking for somebody to use and they just happened to be the people who they used. . . . I do know they were made examples of because I can certainly pick other times where worse stuff has happened and those people never got taken to the task.

There was frustration towards the management, and the feeling that value is placed on finances over the safety and security of the institution. None of the women believed that anything

is going to change without an incident provoking change. They believed that things do not change in the corrections environment until a major incident occurs – such as somebody getting seriously injured or dying:

Until they realize that we are not machines . . . you keep on pushing me to a certain point and I am going to break. . . . Somebody is going to have to die in my intuition and I hope to god it is not on my watch and I hope to god it is not any of my friends. . . . That would be the hardest thing for me. Would I be able to walk around with that? I don't know . . . every kind of act or any change in [here] . . . huge things, it has to happen where a person dies. Management doesn't get that until it does and you know what, then it's going to be the finger pointing, you did, you did, you did. . . . It gets me frustrated.

One woman felt that it is not a healthy environment and the morale for staff is very low. She feels there should be more emphasis on having a balanced work place:

Everybody has their breaking point. How it should be viewed is there has to be some kind of healthy standards. When I am talking about that, we have to have a healthy balance of work and play. We can't, and for some people, work is all they think about. You can't have that. We should have a good healthy standards. Physical activity. Even positive, healthy environment. We don't even have it . . . Management don't care. People don't care after a while. After when people don't care everything goes to shit.

The women suggested that the shift away from rehabilitative efforts, where staff are not focused on interacting with offenders, is leading towards a less human way of conducting correctional services:

Go play cards with the inmates. Go sit down with the inmates and watch TV a program with them, talk to them. The rapport was huge there. . . . That way of doing business, when I started, which was treating offenders like they are human beings, for a lot of staff here it has passed. They treat them like they are all pieces of shit . . . and they yell at them through the bars. . . . The guys are well behaved in [my unit], for the most part, because staff are out there. We actually talk to them like people.

CHAPTER SIX:

INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS WITH THE CURRENT LITERATURE

In this section I will discuss areas where the findings of this study coincided or differed from the current literature on women working in men's correctional facilities. There were several areas where the experiences of the women in this study coincided with the current literature.

The reasons discussed by the women CW participants for entering into corrections were similar to what has been documented in past literature on women CWs. Similar to Belknap's (1991) study, the women in this study entered into men's corrections for the benefits, wages, experience towards policing, and because their prior experience in corrections led them to a similar career path.

The women saw themselves and other women as valuable assets to men's corrections. Some of the benefits that the women saw themselves bringing to the work place were similar to those that have been documented in past studies on women in men's corrections: such as the use of verbal strategies and deescalating potentially violent situations (Farnworth, 1992). Similar to the women in Pogrebin and Poole's (1998) study, these women saw a value in the use of verbal skills and had a belief that situations can be deescalated before they become violent. Physical skills do not have to be as important if situations are not allowed to escalate to the physical level. The women also had similar views to those in Pogrebin and Poole's study about the importance of having a mixture of men and women staff, in that the men vs. men dynamic can sometimes contribute to the escalation of violent events. In Pogrebin and Poole's study, the women also believed that the threat and intimidation strategy that men often use can further exacerbate offender control problems by challenging the offender's manhood and image escalating the situation.

The women in this study felt that they had a normalizing effect on the men's correctional environment. They spoke about being positive role models for offenders in their interactions with women and more specifically women in positions of authority. This normalizing effect was similar to what Newbold (2005) described in his study in that women CWs challenge male offender's inappropriate views of women in society and create an environment more similar to that which would be present outside of the correctional facility. The women in this study also saw their presence in men's centers as being extremely valuable in challenging offender's anti-social views of women and in aiding offenders toward their rehabilitation (Newbold, 2005).

The women in this study felt strongly about women CWs not drawing on their femininity and projecting a professional, rather than feminine image. This finding was consistent with what Farnworth (1992) found: women who adopted behaviors that were stereotypically female were viewed as acting inappropriately in the workplace. Interestingly, Farnworth documented this belief about women staff as having come from male corrections staff. It appears that women may have similar opinions about other women to that of male staff in the past. Rader (2007) also found that women CWs had a tendency to judge other women CWs more harshly if they projected overly feminine characteristics. The women in this study indicated a feeling of being judged as a group, I took this to mean that the women were not necessarily judging other women based on their appearances but more based upon how other women's appearances will reflect back on the group as a whole. This is consistent with what Rader found, as in her study women who projected these qualities were seen as making the role of woman corrections officer more difficult. The women in Rader's study felt this made it more difficult to gain the respect of men CWs because they were consistently compared to women who were less proficient.

The lack of mentorship women are willing to give other women, as well as judging other women as being different than themselves has been documented in other traditionally male dominated careers. Bolton (1980) described the *queen bee syndrome* in traditionally male dominated environments in that there can only be one outstanding woman in the organization and that each individual is responsible for fighting their way to the top without the help of their peers. Making it to the top as a woman in these environments can leave the woman feeling special and different from her peers and thus less likely to encourage the success of other women (Bolton, 1980).

The women CWs felt that having a realistic understanding of their capabilities and areas of strengths and limitations was important to have on the job. Going out of one's way to encourage or engage in physical confrontation was seen as foolish. However, women were viewed as being more than capable of assisting and contributing to physical confrontations as a group. This belief was similar to what Jurik (1988) found in her study, in that being able to assist during physical encounters was important for women as they can show their value and capabilities to male staff. According to Jurik, offering assistance is a way a woman can balance showing she is physically capable without possibly falling into the trap of being too aggressive or too physically weak. Women who were overly aggressive were viewed as foolish while

women who could not handle physical confrontations were viewed as incompetent. Jurik also found that women assisting male staff in physical encounters helped them to form camaraderie in the group. The women in this study also felt that working together helped unify all members of the CW team.

Some of the women's beliefs that on the job training opportunities, such as being put in placements where they would have opportunity to develop physical skills, most often going to the men was also documented in past research on women working in men's corrections. Jurik (1985) found that while there are equal opportunity policies in corrections overall, there are no formal policies for equal opportunity of position and task assignment in everyday operations. The women felt the denial of on the job training and experience can contribute to the view of women as less competent in physical areas because they do not receive the opportunity to practice or enhance these skills. Similar to the women's beliefs in this study, Zimmer (1987) hypothesized that women not receiving on the job training and social opportunities was because they are not accepted in corrections and less training keeps them in a position where they will not be able to develop competence in certain areas.

Hemmens and colleagues' (2002) study was one of the more recently completed studies on women in men's corrections that was found in a review of the literature. Similar to the findings of the current study, Hemmens and colleagues found that though there have been advancements in positive attitudes towards women corrections staff in men's institutions, old negative attitudes surrounding women's capabilities are apparent in some individual male staff members. The opinions of some male staff members can taint the opinion of what women are capable of in doing corrections work. The women had similar views in that they saw a small group of staff and some key areas around the center as being responsible for perpetuating negative interactions among staff members throughout the institution.

The views of the women in this study appear to offer support for the job model of occupational working style. While the gender model proposed that the characteristics women bring to their work come from their prior experiences and attitudes, the job model suggested that the differences seen between women and men on the job are driven by the nature of the job and how the work environment is structured (Zimmer, 1986). The women in this study appeared to be driven by the qualities of the job and the environment they are working in. They expressed a desire to be seen as a professional CW first and as a woman second. They did not appear to have

as many difficulties in balancing sex-role expectations as women in the past, as they made efforts to suppress their feminine qualities while at work and express these qualities mainly in their personal lives (Zimmer, 1986). The responses of the women CWs in this study also seemed to support the views of Jenne and Kerstin (1996) in that the occupational socialization a woman CW receives could counter gender differences in that the women identify with the job-role first and the gender expectations of a women second. When the women CWs in this study did have difficulties on the job with sex-role expectations it was because male staff and inmates have at times refused to view the women as CWs first and women second.

The difficulties the women encountered due to sexual comments and behaviors from offenders, has also been experienced by women in the past. Pogrebin and Poole (1998) saw these behaviors as a means to diminish the authority of women staff members and also as a way for offenders to probe for possible weaknesses to exploit. Similar to the women from past research, several of the women in the current study were advised to grow a “thick skin” in order to cope with these behaviors.

The feelings of some of the women CWs in the study that women are judged as a group, in that the negative performance or conduct of one woman can taint the views of the other women, has been documented in past research on women in men’s corrections. The women in Pogrebin and Poole’s (1998) study recalled feeling judged as a gender class rather than on their individual merits. The women’s beliefs that inappropriate behaviors or misconduct was judged differently based on a person’s gender has also been documented in past research. Pogrebin and Poole (1998) had similar findings in that greater attention was paid to mistakes and inappropriate behaviors from women staff than similar behaviors by male staff. The women felt that they were constantly observed for signs of negative job performance and needed to continually prove themselves (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

Some of the women in this study spoke about women who had received promotional opportunities or assignments being judged as not having earned them or about speculation that there was an exchange of sexual favors for job opportunities. This undermining of women’s abilities to get these promotional opportunities on their own accord or having deserved such advancements was not observed to apply to men who had received promotional opportunities. This phenomenon has been documented in past studies of women CWs. Pogrebin and Poole (1998) also found that women receiving promotions were viewed as not having earned the

promotion or that there was speculation that the woman had earned the promotion through sexual favors.

The women's views regarding women being placed in management roles to complete the organizational tasks to make a spot for a man to take over along with needing to go along with the good old boy's club in order to keep their spot in management has been documented in other non-traditional roles. It has been documented that the presence of women has increased in the upper levels of management and in many traditionally male dominated roles. However, this breaking of the *glass ceiling* has come with additional challenges for women in these roles. The *glass cliff* phenomenon proposed by Haslam and Ryan (2008) posited that women are more likely to be appointed to upper management positions that are risky or precarious to be in due to issues and crisis in the organization overall. This means that women in these positions are often placed there in times when failure is more likely because there is already organizational crisis. This also makes it more likely that negative outcomes will be associated with the woman manager though these outcomes may have been initiated long before she undertook her new role (Haslam & Ryan, 2008).

The harassment of women CWs at the hands of their male co-workers, similar to what the women experienced in this study, has been documented in past studies of women CWs (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). Similar to the research findings of Pogrebin and Poole (1997), several of the women in this study reported more instances of harassment at the hands of their male co-workers than male inmates. Women CWs were subjected to sexual and gender based harassment on the job. It has been documented in the past that women have been reluctant to report harassing behaviors due to fears of retaliation (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). The women in this study did experience retaliation over reporting harassment, as the harassment was reported to have gotten worse after the participants sought help for the harassment they were experiencing. The women were seemingly punished for pushing back against an environment where harassment has been normalized. Pogrebin and Poole also found these types of behaviors in their research on women CWs. They found that women who are violating occupational norms by working in men's institutions are viewed as deserving whatever may happen to them as a result. Cadwaladr (1993) also documented the normalization of harassment in her study. She felt that the culture of corrections work assumes that being subjected to harassment is a natural and inevitable sacrifice

of working in the corrections field. Harassment becomes normalized and is therefore accepted by both men and women in corrections.

The women reported experiencing mental health issues as a result of stress and trauma experiences on the job. These issues experienced by the women CWs in the study are similar to what has been documented in past research on women in men's corrections. In past research women have reported feeling angry, irritable, and hopeless from the harassment they experienced (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). The emotional problems resulting from workplace harassment and stress by women CWs can also extend beyond the work place. Jurik (1988) found that women CWs reported problems sleeping, and that the stress of harassment at work caused their home life to suffer (Jurik, 1988). These women also experienced problems from work extending into one's home life as they reported their personal relationships were affected by stress they experienced as a result of working in corrections. The participants also identified the need to not take the issues from their home life into work, or bring issues from work home. They felt women might be more vulnerable to the emotional impact of their work affecting their home life or vice versa. One of the women spoke about the different roles that women may be more likely to fill once home from work that can be a source of additional stress that women may be more vulnerable to. This second-shift phenomenon described that after working outside of the home in the workforce, women may be more likely to have to perform household roles such as cleaning, cooking, and child rearing once back in the home (Hochschild, 1989).

CHAPTER SEVEN:

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND STUDY STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

In this section I will discuss what implications the results of this study may have on women CWs, the correctional facilities where they are employed, and future research. I will also discuss the strengths and limitations that pertained to the current study. Finally, I will reflect back on my experience in navigating the dual-role of student researcher and study participant.

Implications for Women Corrections Workers

Though sharing their stories often meant exposing the most vulnerable parts of themselves both as women and as CWs, the participants saw the importance and value in sharing what it is like to be a woman CW. The narrative method of this study allowed for a broad exploration of the women's experiences, what these experiences looked and felt like, and the meanings they made of these experiences. Though much of the women's experiences were consistent with past findings in the literature, a narrative perspective allowed for an expansion of our knowledge about women CWs due to being able to communicate their experiences in an in-depth and descriptive manner. Although negative aspects of corrections work were identified by the participants, they also showed an overall presence of resilience and coping despite adversity. The women have overcome challenges, managed to be successful in corrections, and chosen to stay working in the field. For men who still may feel that women are the softer sex or that women are not strong enough to work in corrections, the experiences of these women and what they have endured might challenge those beliefs and provide evidence to the contrary. The results of this study could help people from both genders appreciate the experiences of women CWs, and possibly guide corrections facilitator's efforts to build a more positive, healthy work environment.

The findings of this study suggested that though women have worked in corrections for several decades they still experience unique challenges. Being that women now make up a large percentage of the work force in many men's correctional facilities, understanding their experiences is important to provide necessary support to these staff to help them cope with workplace challenges. It seems that "catch all" support plans that address issues that all CWs (men and women) together might face may not be sufficient as their experiences are not qualitatively the same. Exploring the types of support that could best help this population not only survive in their work place, but thrive as valued and respected staff members is a benefit not

only to women CWs but to the corrections organization who relies on these women to delivery quality correctional services. Suggestions from the participants, such as mandatory counselling and more support for staff members experiencing vulnerabilities were seen as areas that could aid staff during difficult times and help improve the mental health of women staff members. More proactive support for staff could help prevent resulting issues from stress such as decreased productivity from sick leave and staff going off work on stress leave. Being proactive and helping women when they are first in need of assistance and reducing the stigma associated with being vulnerable in corrections could help reduce instances of inappropriate conduct (i.e., violating the code of conduct) as staff are supported before they fall into a position of vulnerability. Handling reports of harassment in a consistent and appropriate manner could make it more likely that staff would feel comfortable coming forward with issues to be addressed and for staff to feel supported in their work place.

Implications for Future Research

The aim of the current study was to examine the experiences of women CWs working in a men's correctional facility using narrative inquiry. By completing this study I hoped to provide an in-depth description of what being a woman CW was like, as well expand on the dated literature on women employed in men's corrections. This study was successful in both providing current information on the experiences of women CWs and also in giving a voice to the women so they could share not only their experiences but also their thoughts and feelings about these experiences. The results of this study suggested opportunities for future research in the corrections field. As the experiences of older, more senior staff differed, in some respects, to that of younger, more junior staff in regards to the types of challenges and experiences, one could do a comparison study of the two groups. This study could also be replicated in other men's institutions to see what the experiences of the women CWs employed looked like. Additionally, women in other roles in men's correctional facilities such as management or support staff could give accounts of their experiences as women in those roles.

An area that was of particular interest and surprise to me was the concept I termed equal opportunity harassment, in that it seems that all staff may be at risk of encountering bullying and harassing behaviors at the hands of other staff members. This included women harassing women, women harassing men, and men harassing other men. Research into same gender harassment,

including male participants, could be completed to provide more information about this occurrence.

As the women discussed the second-shift phenomenon in their experiences, a study could also be completed on women being more vulnerable to their home lives affecting their work or vice versa compared to their male counterparts in corrections. Due to the presence of stress and mental health issues (such as PTSD) being reported by the participants, another potential area of research could be to use a documented method of measuring the presence of such issues and compare the presence of mental health and stress among men and women CWs. The prevalence of mental health issues among corrections staff overall could also be completed due to the stressful nature of the job. Research into the types of support that are most effective in helping women navigate the challenges of working corrections would be beneficial to the corrections field. Women CWs could offer insight into what types of support have offered them the most help in coping with challenges that affect them such as harassment, stress, personal vulnerability, and mental health effects.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The current study used narrative inquiry to explore the experiences of women CWs employed in a men's correctional facility. As with all research studies, the current study is subject to limitations. The limitations that should be considered regarding the current study are the dual-role of the researcher, protecting the identity of the participants, and the transferability of the findings. The strengths of the study were the contribution to the literature, the diverse sample and the dual-role of the researcher.

Due to the small pool of participants used, there was a possibility that, despite my best efforts, the identity of the participants may not be protected. Additionally, because most of the women know each other personally, there is a possibility that if a participant was aware of a particular situation having occurred to another one of the participants, that they would be able to identify them. Due to the knowledge that participants may be more easily identified through narrative inquiry than other research methods due to the sharing of personal experiences a composite narrative of the participant's experiences was created. This decision to protect the identity of the participants, including myself, came with a trade off that the differences between individual experiences were less examined and presented as part of the study.

This study contributed to the literature on women CWs in both a qualitative manner and in a current time frame. The past literature on women CWs is dated and there is a lack of studies that examined the experiences of women CWs in depth (e.g., Jurik, 1988; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). Though the results of this study cannot be taken as generalizable to the overall experiences of all women CWs, nor was this the goal, we do now have a better understanding of the experiences and realities of these women CWs. Another strength of the study was that the sample of women participants was quite diverse. The women were of varying ages and their length of time employed as CWs in a men's correctional center were different. This provided a more diverse view of the experiences of women CWs than if the participants were all of similar ages and in the role of CW for a similar amount of time.

As with other qualitative studies, it is possible that other conclusions and interpretations of the research could be reached. This is likely especially true in a study such as this where the researcher is in a dual-role. Being in a dual-role meant I had to be especially careful not to project my own feelings onto the interpretation of the data and that I needed to take as objective a stance as possible when analyzing the data. Typically having a dual-role in research would not be ideal, as one might question the researcher's ability to be objective in conducting research and also the ethical implications of privacy and free consent (Josselson, 2007). What was likely the biggest limitation in my study was also one of its greatest strengths. Being a woman CW and having a personal working relationship with these participants allowed me to delve into personal accounts in more depth as I had an understanding of what the participants were referring to, and was able to ask appropriate follow-up questions due to having been in the corrections environment myself. The nature of the study required the participants' vulnerability as they shared sensitive accounts. As the participant's already knew me personally I was likely able to make them feel more comfortable talking about these experiences than they would have been to a researcher who was a stranger.

Epilogue

Doing this research has been both rewarding and challenging. When I first considered completing my Master's thesis on women in corrections I did not see myself as being part of it. Even though I was working nights and weekends while attending classes during the week through much of my program, I did not initially appreciate the value of delving into my own experiences in the CW role. My desire was to be the researcher and separate myself from the

woman CW inside. My supervisor asked me “where are you going to ‘be’ in this research?” and initially, I did not have the answer to this question. Reluctantly at first, I came to the realization that I would need to open myself up to the idea that I would need to be vulnerable as well and reflect on and share an area that, while being a huge part of my life, was not always positive for me. Looking back, I suppose it was only fair that by asking my fellow co-workers to place themselves in a vulnerable situation, open up areas of themselves and confront feelings and thoughts they might not have shared before, that I should be brave enough to do the same thing.

This process left me with a new appreciation of the strength of the women I worked with. Especially when I heard the experiences of the women who broke the ground so to speak, entering into an environment where they were not wanted or accepted. I wondered if I was placed in that position if I would be able to endure the same things? I felt grateful for the sacrifices those women made so that I could have a less difficult time entering into corrections. I cannot say I was ready to have my eyes opened to just how much I have been affected by this job, but it helped me to learn that I was not the only one who has had moments of wondering if I am able to cope with working in the corrections environment.

We, as women CWs, shared moments of tears and moments of laughter as we delved into the past and reflected on the present. I am thankful to be finishing the final component for my Master’s degree and starting a new chapter of my life, but I will never forget the way my fellow co-workers embraced my study and me. I hope that they, like me, have been empowered by entering into this research and sharing their experiences.

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Appendix A

Invitation to Participate

University of Saskatchewan

Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education



I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study entitled:

**A Narrative Exploration of the Experiences of Female Corrections
Workers Employed in a Male Correctional Facility.**

Participation criteria:

- Must be a female employed in the role of corrections worker at [a mid-size prairie city] Provincial Correctional Center. Individuals must currently be working in a CW1 position in either full-time or part-time capacity.
- Be willing to reflect on and discuss topics related to your experiences of being a woman in this role.
- Be willing to participate in an interview with the researcher and complete diary entries following your work shift for a one-week period. Diary entries will involve a reflection of the days shift, including your thoughts, feelings, challenges, and overall experience as a woman in this role. The interview session will be approximately 1.5-3 hours in length and diary entries will be approximately one page each.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive a Tim Horton's gift card valued at \$15. The cost of parking at the University of Saskatchewan for the interview will be provided by the researcher.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study,
please contact:

Jill Hrenyk

Email: jch945@mail.usask.ca

**This study has been reviewed by, and received approval
through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan.**



Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *A Narrative Exploration of the Experiences of Female Corrections Workers Employed in a Male Correctional Facility*. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to contact the researcher with any questions you might have

Researcher: Jill Hrenyk, Graduate Student, Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, University of Saskatchewan (Ph: 306-270-4392; Email: jch945@mail.usask.ca)

Supervisor: Dr. Stephanie Martin, Department of Educational Psychology & Special Education, University of Saskatchewan (Ph: 306-966-5259; Email: Stephanie.Martin@usask.ca)

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

-The aim of the proposed study is to explore the experiences of female corrections workers working in a male correctional facility. Females employed in this environment are found to have unique experiences and challenges not shared by their male counterparts. Understanding the experiences of females in this role from their point of view could help in advancing our knowledge about this group and their workplace.

Procedures:

-As a participant you will be asked to meet the researcher to discuss your experience of working as a female in a male correctional facility. Topics of discussion may include your experience of the challenges and rewards of this work. Interviews will take place outside of work hours, requiring a personal time commitment. The interview will take place at the University of Saskatchewan at a time mutually agreed to by the participant and researcher. The interview will last 1.5-3 hours. Should the researcher have follow-up questions there is the possibility you may be asked for a second interview. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

-As a participant in the study you will also be asked to complete an at-home diary entry each day (approximately 1 page) for one week following your work shift. Diary entries will involve a reflection of the days shift, including your thoughts, feelings, challenges, and overall experience as a woman in this work. The researcher will provide you with a notebook.

Potential Risks:

-Participating in the proposed study may pose a minimal risk of emotional discomfort as you reflect on and share your personal experiences. If you become emotionally upset during the interview process the researcher will provide a break and ensure you are able to continue in the study, if you wish. Regardless, for whatever reason, you always have the right to withdraw from the study.

-As an employee of the [Government of Saskatchewan] you have access to the Employee Assistance Program should you feel you need assistance in coping with the stress or emotional trauma of past experiences. The Employee Assistance Program can be reached at (306) 787-7563.

Potential Benefits:

-There are no direct personal benefits of participating in the study, although the results of this study could enhance what is known about the experience of female corrections workers working in all-male corrections environments.

Compensation:

-Compensation for parking at the University of Saskatchewan will be provided by the researcher.
-In appreciation for your time the researcher would like to offer you a Tim Horton's gift card valued at \$15. Participants will receive compensation for parking and the gift card even if they withdraw from the study.

Confidentiality:

-The researcher will take necessary steps to ensure your confidentiality as a participant. Your name will be changed on all written documents produced from interview and diary data. All files containing interview and diary data will be stored on a password-protected computer and within encrypted documents.

-Consent Forms will be stored separately from the diary and interview data, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. Please do not put your name or other identifying information on the diary document.

-In order to ensure the confidentiality of any third-party individuals please avoid using the names or personally identifying information of any staff or offenders in your interview or diary entries.

-Complete anonymity cannot be assured, as the researcher knows you personally.

-The data collected during the study will be used in the completion of my Master's thesis. Data will be reported in aggregate form with direct quotations of interview or diary data used to report results. The researcher will edit statements to ensure other individuals cannot identify you, but due to the context and small numbers of potential participants there is the possibility that someone familiar with you may be able to identify you based on your responses.

-As per Ministry of Justice, Corrections, and Policing policy, if instances of sexual misconduct by named or unnamed individuals, information pertaining to criminal activity, information jeopardizing the safety of any individual in the center or security of the center, or information regarding the safety of children are reported in either interview or diary data I am obligated to report it to the Ministry.

An individual other than the researcher will be hired to transcribe the interview data. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, this individual will be required to sign a declaration of confidentiality stating that they will keep all information pertaining to this study confidential and will be required to store study data in a secure place.

-After your interview, and prior to the data being included in the final report, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcript as you see fit.

-The Ministry of Justice, Corrections, and Policing may require a copy of the final report or presentation of the study results.

Storage of Data:

-The research project results and associated material will be safeguarded and securely stored by the researcher at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years post publication. When the data no longer required, the data will be destroyed via shredding and file deletion.

Right to Withdraw:

-Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may refuse to answer any individual question during the interview or withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.

-Should you wish to withdraw please inform the researcher and any collected data from the diary or interview will be destroyed. Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply until aggregate analysis of all participant data has occurred at which time it will not be possible to withdraw your data

Follow up:

-A summary of research results will be made available upon request. To obtain results from the study, please contact the researcher at the provided email address at the top of page 1 following the study.

Questions or Concerns:

-Contact the researcher using the information at the top of page 1.

-This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ <i>Name of Participant</i>	_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Date</i>
_____ <i>Researcher's Signature</i>	_____ <i>Date</i>	

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher

Appendix C

Transcript Release Form



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Research Ethics Boards

(Behavioral and Biomedical)

Transcript Release Form

Study: *A Narrative Exploration of the Experiences of Female Corrections Workers Employed in a Male Correctional Facility*

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Jill Hrenyk. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Jill Hrenyk to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of researcher

Appendix D

Interview Guide

Background Information and Correctional Experience

What brought you to the study?

How long have you been employed in corrections?

How did you come to work in corrections?

-Was corrections always an area of interest for you?

What is your educational and occupational background?

Prior to working at [the center] what did you expect working in a men's correctional facility to be like?

- How does the reality of the job differ from what your expectations were?

Being a Woman in a Traditionally Male Dominated Role

How have the changing roles of women in the workplace or in society affected you, if at all?

Jails and prisons have traditionally been male dominated areas and associated with masculine characteristics. Is this something you considered before taking the job?

Did this knowledge in any way affect how you viewed your capabilities to work in this environment? If so, in what ways?

The Experience of Being a Woman in a Men's Jail

What is it like for you being a woman working in a men's jail?

Do you feel you experience any challenges related to being a women working in this environment?

-If so please describe these challenges.

-If so how do you cope with these challenges?

Are there any difficulties or obstacles in working in a men's correctional facility that women face while men corrections workers do not?

How would you describe your experiences around being a woman working with men staff in a men's correctional center?

What about being a woman working with men inmates?

Some units/areas at [the correctional center] may be predominantly staffed by men or women. Have you experienced either of these possibilities and if so what differences or observations have you had regarding gender dynamics?

What do you think some of the biggest challenges are to how women are viewed in men's correctional facilities?

What benefits do you see in having women staff in a men's correctional facility?

What are the best things about the job for you?

What would you want other women to know about what it's like to pursue this career path?

Is there anything you have learned about yourself in reflecting on your experiences as part of this study?

Corrections Work and Woman Identity

Do you think that working in corrections has affected the way you view yourself as a woman or your personal identity? If participants require clarification of the question – For example some women have reported difficulty balancing their role and identity as a woman with the masculine demands of the job.

Appendix E

Transcriber Declaration of Confidentiality



***Transcriber Declaration of
Confidentiality Form***

I have been hired to transcribe electronic audio interview data for the researcher, Jill Hrenyk, for the Thesis project entitled *A Narrative Exploration of the Experiences of Female Corrections Workers Employed in a Male Correctional Facility*.

When transcribing the electronic audio files I will be the only one to hear the audio data. I agree to keep all information pertaining to this project confidential and will not reveal any information contained in the project data sets. I will also keep the electronic audio files and paper transcripts in a secure and locked place at all times. When the transcription process is complete I will return any data to Jill Hrenyk and delete any electronic files pertaining to this study that are in my possession.

I will sign both copies of this form and return one to Jill Hrenyk.

Signature

Date

Appendix F

Guidelines for Diary Entries

- Diary entries are to be filled out outside of work hours after completion of your shift for your next 7-workday rotation, for a total of 7 diary entries.
- If you miss a shift due to illness or time off of work, please fill out the missed entry after your next work shift.
- Please keep your name or personally identifying information relevant to you out of your diary entries.
- Please avoid using the names or personally identifying of other staff members or offenders in your entries.
- There is no maximum or minimum length for the diary entries. Approximately one-page would be appropriate, however if you have more to share please do so.
- Topics to consider writing about:
 - o A reflection of the days shift, including your thoughts and feelings
 - o Events or experiences on shift that resonated with you on a personal level
 - o Experienced rewards and/or challenges
 - o Reflection on being a women in this line of work
 - o How you feel one's gender may or may not have affected the different experiences of your daily duties as a Corrections Worker working with men offenders
- Once diary entries are completed, please mail the diary booklet to the researcher using the provided self-addressed-stamped envelope.